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WINTERS IN ALGERIA

BY

F. A. BRIDGMAN

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RUE PORTE NEUVE.

WINTERS IN ALGERIA

Written and Illustrated

BY

FREDERICK ARTHUR BRIDGMAN

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

1890

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WINTERS IN ALGERIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE "WHITE DOVE."

LATE in November, 1885, and at a late hour in the day, we left the harbor of Marseilles, made glorious by the reflections from a splendid sunset; for the filthy water of the busy port assumed a very different aspect from what it wore in broad daylight. In a few minutes we had distanced the black shipping, an inextricable net-work of rigging, the enormous floating wharves, and the light-house. Our fine steamer *Ville de Madrid* then turned her nose towards Algiers at full speed, giving us but a few moments to look upon the island of Château-d'If and to recall Monte-Cristo. On a high promontory Notre Dame de la Garde, the beacon for sailor devotees, rose and faded in the steel-blue sky, suggesting a diminutive Matterhorn.

The Mediterranean—"beautiful wretch"—enticed us on through her smooth waters, which would have been, by sunlight, so blue at the ship's side as to make a piece of lapis-lazuli appear almost gray in comparison. "Beautiful" in her behavior until the following day at noon; but by the time we had passed the islands of Majorca and Minorca, where white houses and win-

dows were glinting in the sun, she verified the appellation of "wretch." She is proverbially treacherous, and certainly, according to my own record of her conduct, I can say very little to her credit.

Was it due to the fact of my having been born in Alabama, with sunlight in my bones, that I felt at home in Algeria when I first set foot on her genial soil in 1872? Or was my satisfaction the effect of the contrast to dark and dingy Brittany, where the interiors are black, and the mud floors absorb the sun's rays; where the low gray clouds could serve as an appropriate frame and background to no other low-toned, sullen, and sombre figure than the Breton, and where white objects are not luminous, because they are not supported and encouraged to shine by the reflections from their surroundings? Certain it is that my first impressions of North Africa can never be dispelled. The near prospect of revisiting its sunny shores was to me one of those delightful anticipations in life which haunt the fancy; and no sooner had I set foot on land than I began with joy to sniff the odors so peculiar to Oriental towns—perfumes of musk, tobacco, orange-blossoms, coffee, hashish—a subtle combination which impregnates Algerine clothing and hovers about the shops and bazaars.

Algiers, seen from the sea, is a mass of white surrounded by the dark green of the olives: the Arabs compare it to a diamond set in an emerald frame. The city is also called "Alger la Blanche," and again Algiers has been compared to a white dove settling on the hill-side. The aspect of the old town which suggested to its author this comparison must have been similar to that presented to us on this ideal night; and how difficult it was to realize the change which had taken place in this hot-bed of corsairs and pirates during the nineteenth century! Only as far back as 1830—when the

French took possession of Algiers — anything but "doves" had settled on this hill-side; blood-thirsty and tyrannical deys gloated on murder, bondage, slavery, rapine, and on the extortion from the rulers of surrounding countries of money, ships, cannon, munitions of war. Their formidable batteries would have made short work of any ship like ours, sailing quietly into their harbor to anchor for any purpose but that of affording them the opportunity to plunder its contents, to put the captain to languish and die in chains, and to stuff the crew into mortars and fire them off at the heads of any foreigners who dared to come to their rescue.

But this was a horrid dream, which must be shaken off in the presence of the tranquil reality.

Nothing could surpass the loveliness of the spectacle before us; the moon was almost full and shone nearly perpendicularly on the compact mass of white houses, with an occasional Jewish dwelling tinted pale blue; here and there the faint red flame of a lamp was seen through the little apertures, rather than windows, from a café where the Arabs often indulge in late-hour gossip and in playing drafts, or from a *m'chacha*, where hashish-smokers, stretched out on matting, were dreaming of their better world, the Paradise of Mohammed.

All was motionless, and no sounds were heard from the shore, as we glided into the harbor, save the plashing of the oars of small boats coming to meet us. The "White Dove" lay asleep on the hill-side against the softest of blue skies — clear, and yet having the appearance of a transparent enamel like the tender old Chinese blue one is so fond of. The calm and lucid surface of the water mirrored the whole scene, and the "great stars that globed themselves in heaven" were doubled in the profound stillness of the sea.

Something like forty years ago there were no modern well-built quay and boulevard running the whole length of the city; the Arab town came down to the water's edge, and boats were moored to rings in the very walls of the houses. What a picture!—fishing-smacks, one mast raking forward, the other backward, with colored sails thrown over the boom to shelter sailors making their *bouillabaisse*, the blue smoke curling up through the rigging. Boats of this kind are still there to-day, and at sunset the smaller ones snugly pack themselves side by side, and Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards, Maltese, and Arabs crack their jokes and cook their supper under awnings and sails worthy of the reputation of dear old Venice.

Nearly all the passengers were now on deck and prepared to go ashore, to avoid being awakened again at five o'clock in the morning by the unloading of cargo in the grip of that demon, the jerky, cranky, dislocated machine known as the donkey-engine; so called in honor of the being who invented it. We landed in small boats, and paid according to a fixed tariff. Oh, delightful innovation! to be fully appreciated only by the sleepy traveller who has set foot on some Oriental shore, and has had his coat and collar torn off by Arabs—forty, we will say, to strike an average—trying to get possession of him and his baggage.

"Here, you handsome big chap, take charge of my things—hotel So-and-so. What's your name?"

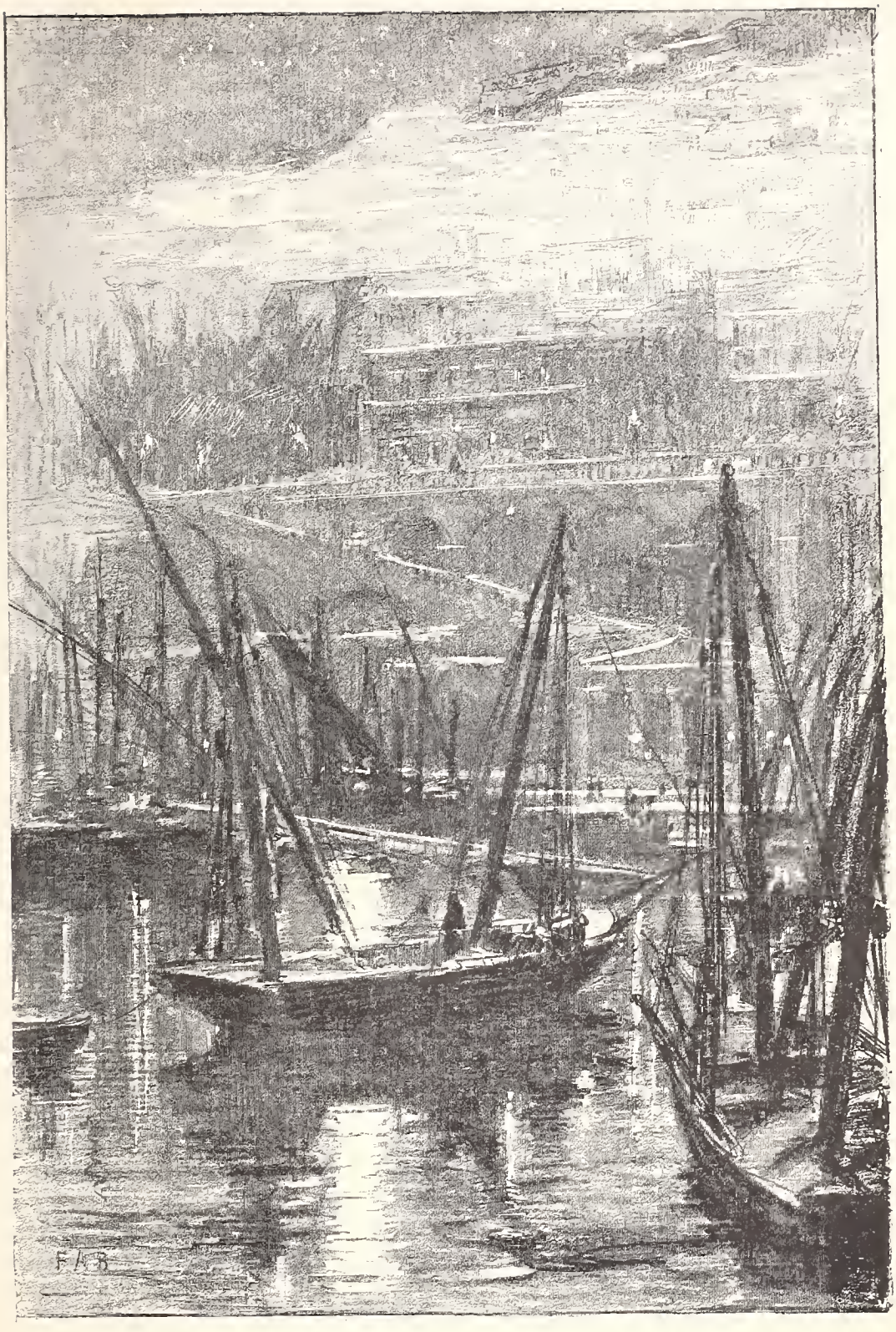
"Mohammed."

"Yes, of course; I know that much already. Mohammed ben what?"

"Ben Aïssa, mister. You Inglesy?"

"Not exactly."

"Then you Melican?"



"I am a *saouarr* [artist], and I am going to paint your portrait. Where shall I find you?"

His willingness to pose was not overwhelming, but we made an appointment which, of course, he never kept. This "appointment which, of course, he never kept," may almost be converted into a rule when dealing with Arabs. At any rate, I concluded that two o'clock in the morning was not the hour for engaging models.

CHAPTER II.

THE STRANGERS' QUARTER.

ONCE I knew a little chap who always began reading the story of Aladdin thus: "Na town in Tartary there lived a tailor whose name was Mustapha," omitting the big ornamental "I," which made an intelligible beginning—"In a town," etc. Just out of Algiers are suburbs called "Mustapha Supérieur" and "Mustapha Inférieur," and I seldom hear the name of Mustapha without being reminded of the poor tailor; and this reminiscence has always served me as a kind of connecting link between the old Arabian story of the "Wonderful Lamp" and anecdotes and legends of the people in the midst of whom I have spent a good deal of time.

At Mustapha Supérieur, then, let us pitch our tent for the winter season, in the midst of semi-tropical vegetation. The fuchsia, geranium, cactus, and many other plants which struggle for a stunted and diminutive existence in Northern climes, attain here remarkable size, especially the geranium, with twisted and snake-like stems and branches, growing to the height of six feet or more, and enlivening the surroundings with its vermilion flowers. On the pale green cactus grow bright yellow and red flowers, and the beautiful but treacherous prickly-pear, so well armed with its nettled down. Twisted fig-trees, with pale gray trunks and branches, aged cypresses, great swaying olives, pines moaning when fretted with the lightest wind of heaven

(but they are here so surrounded by sunlight and flowers that their mournful influence must be subordinate), almond-trees, large-leaved vines, malachite aloes growing out of red earth, and forming impenetrable hedges on each side of steep and stony paths — these are the most characteristic growths of this soil. The roads they border are sometimes old Roman ways, paved, and overshadowed by the luxuriant growth, and so dark towards evening that coming from El-Biar one stumbles down a long and lonely lane that seems to have no end.

At the back of our hotel, and starting at the governor's summer palace, perhaps two miles from the town, runs the most charming of roads, "le Chemin des Aqueducs," quite level, but twisting and turning round every old landslide, and retreating again to the depths of every ravine, bringing the traveller within a stone's-throw of his footsteps of ten minutes previous. At last, after fascinating glimpses and pictures ready-made, and framed in by olives and cacti, of the bay, the town, and harbor, he comes to the old citadel, the *Kasbah*, high above the town.

Returning to our starting-point, we find ourselves in the midst of white villas, roses, and vegetation, and on the high-road and thoroughfare leading out of Algiers, the daily drive of the winter residents, the road for omnibuses, diligences, and for miserable Arabs coming and going, urging home their laden donkeys and others their camels, carrying immense loads of brushwood, straw in nets, or merchandise in well-stuffed *tellis* (enormous double bags), brushing against the garden walls and passers-by. This is the high-road to Blidah, passing through Birkadem and other villages.

An important feature in the aspect of Algiers is the citadel. Overlooking the town at the corner of the high fortified walls, which were built down to the sea, stands the old palace

of the deys, now used as a garrison for Zouaves. Within its walls are several interesting buildings—in fact, a small city in itself—a palace, garden, a mosque constructed in an unusual way, with four marble columns united to support each arch, and another curious building of immense vaults under one roof, resembling a round loaf of bread flattened on the top, and standing separate from the surrounding buildings. This was the treasury in the palmy days of piracy, when millions upon millions in money and jewels seem to have puffed out its sides, although of masonry. It now serves as a powder-magazine.

Built out from a balcony looking into the court is the "Pavillon de Coup d'Eventail," of historical interest. The French consul paid a visit to the Dey to demand certain accounts of financial affairs for which the Dey held himself responsible; but this potentate answered by slapping the consul in the face with his fan, a moment of satisfaction which cost the Dey his dominion; for the French landed not long after on the shores of Algiers, and the irascible ruler was sent to recuperate in foreign atmosphere never to return.*

"Alger la Blanche," seen from the roof of the palace, tumbles down and down, terrace after terrace of dazzling white under the noonday sun, and almost without shadows. Evening creeps on, and the sun, setting behind the hills of the Sahel, gilds at last only here and there a house-top and a minaret faced with glistening tiles; the long blue shadows soon merge into one;

* This happened in 1830. Hussein Pacha, the Dey (Sir L. Playfair tells in his interesting work, "Hand-book for Travellers in Algeria and Tunis"), embarked with a suite of one hundred and ten persons, of whom fifty-five were women. After residing in Italy for a time he went to Egypt, where Mohammed Ali Pacha received him with the consideration due to his rank and misfortunes. One day, after a private audience, Hussein retired to his private apartments and died a few hours afterwards, it is said, in violent convulsions.

BALL AT THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE.

the sun still lingers on the sails of fishing-boats out in the bay; and lastly on Cape Matifou and Djurdjura.

Many of the foreign residents on the heights are English, who spend successive winters in the beautiful villas, in which are combined the charms of Arab construction with the modification of English detail. Here they exchange English hospitalities under Algerine conditions, and a dinner party with European friends in the Moorish court, or patio, is certainly a novel and charming entertainment. An awning is stretched overhead, and in the centre of the court, paved with marble or colored tiles, stands a fountain, the water playing over roses and jasmines, and trickling down honeysuckle, lilies, and green palms, and splashing on the fish in the basin below; and all this in the winter months. The circular table, laden too with flowers, is placed within the columns and around the fountain.

The governor and admiral give two or three official balls during the winter season—one at the admiralty, situated on the ancient harbor, others at the governor's palaces at Mustapha Supérieur and in the town. The reception, of which an illustration is given, took place in March, at the winter palace in town; the guests were composed of the French residents, civil and military, English, a few other foreigners, a dozen Arab chiefs, and the Mufti. The latter dignitaries, with the native military officers, scattered among the Europeans in the Moorish interior, gave the local color to the reception. The chiefs, notwithstanding the heat of the ball-rooms, wore their ample cloth pantaloons, red leather boots in black leather outer shoes, several burnooses, one over the other, scarlet, black, fawn-color, pale blue. They did not seem very much in their element.

The English afternoon tea and tennis receptions are delightful, in gardens luxuriant with trees and bushes bearing fruit of all sorts. Besides oranges, bananas, grapes, lime, lemon, are

fruits less familiar to us: the Japanese medlar, of a bright yellow, acid, and very refreshing, with four big brown seeds, resembling the kaki of Japan; another (the name of which I do not recall) very much like the mango of India, in consistence more like a thick mass of very hard cream than anything else I can think of, and with very delicate flavor, the exterior symmetrically ornamented with fish-scale design like the pineapple.

The papyrus, so well known as the plant with which the ancient Egyptians made a tissue resembling paper, and upon which they wrote, grows in these patios in the basins of the fountains. The long, straight stem is three-sided like a bayonet, and can be split into fine fibres and woven.

There are a few comparatively wealthy Arab families who live in this quarter, and the women are pleased to receive European ladies, and occasionally make appointments to return their calls, but with the understanding that the gentlemen of the house must keep themselves well out of the way, so that they may unveil themselves and take tea comfortably with the hostess.

During my first visit to Algiers, I remember seeing a kind of conveyance which I have never noticed since. It was like a carry-all covered with a cage formed of close lattice-work, in which sat half a dozen young women, the well-guarded wives of some jealous lord, who only allowed them the privilege of a pleasure-drive under those conditions of privacy. The only similar contrivances that I know of are the small boats at Cairo with housings over them, used for conveying across the Nile the inmates of a harem on the Island of Rhoda.

In the thorough cleaning and scraping of one of the finest villas of Mustapha, a stone embedded a little below the surface of the wall, near the ceiling, and bearing an inscription in English, was discovered; it bore the name of an

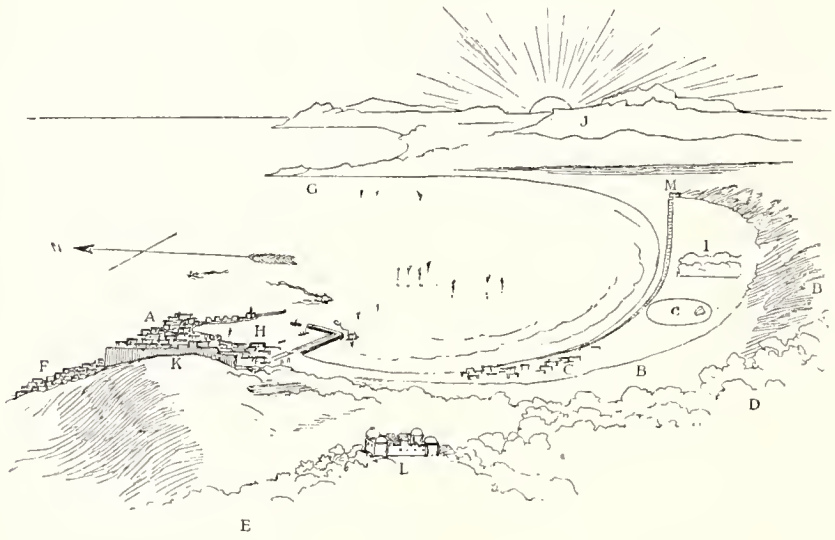
English captive and slave who had been employed in the building of the house.

Another interesting incident is found in Vasari's "Life of Fra Filippo Lippi," the old Italian painter:

"Finding himself in the March of Ancona, and being one day at sea in a boat with certain friends of his, they were all caught by the Moors who ranged about those coasts, and taken into Barbary and kept in slavery, each one being put into chains. There he remained with great distress during eighteen months. But one day, being much in the company of his master, he had a fancy for drawing his portrait. Having taken an extinguished charcoal from the fire, he drew him full length, with his Moorish costume, upon the surface of a white wall. This being told to the master by the other slaves, to whom it seemed a miracle — neither drawing nor painting being practised in those parts — it was the cause of his liberation from the chains that had so long confined him. Truly it is a glory to this great power of art that one to whom belonged by law the right of punishing and condemning should do precisely the contrary — nay, should be persuaded to give caresses instead of chastisement, and liberty instead of death. Having, then, done some work in painting for his master, he was taken in safety back to Naples."

Mustapha Supérieur is well named, as it is indeed superior in every sense of the word to the lower part of the hill, which flattens out towards the bay. The houses are almost entirely of modern construction, and form quite a separate village. Close by is a very large open space — the drilling-ground and race-course — where every morning, from my bed even, I could see the manœuvrings of the French cavalry. The horses at that distance looked like mosquitoes. The sun was my chronometer and barometer. The first cold, gray flush

of dawn in a cloudless sky, mirrored in the sea without a ripple, gave promise of a perfect day, and told me how much longer it was allowable to lie in bed and make calculations for the day's work. Djurdjura, covered with snow, and rising above and beyond the long, dark blue mountains of the Atlas range, hung in space, with an unbroken band of mist dividing land and water. Now came the early morning train on its way to Blidah, leaving a trail of white smoke low and motionless along its track, which first rounds the bay, then makes a straight dash to Maison-Carrée. The sky grew warmer and of a greenish tinge, then red and more golden over the sweep of the bay, hemmed in by an out-stretched promontory—Cape Matifou—away to the left, and to the right by the beautiful hills of

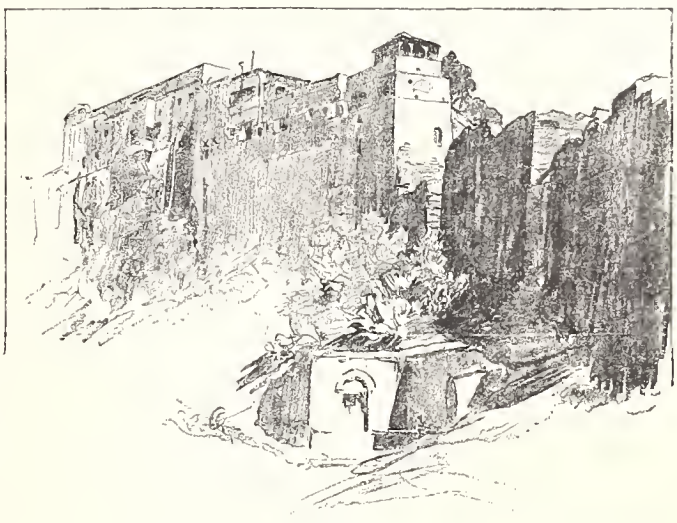


THE BAY OF ALGIERS.

Mustapha, black with olive-trees, and dotted with white Arab villas. I could hear the regular plashing of the waves on the sands, and the sound of each wave died away as it followed the beach, beginning at one end and running along like the lash of a whip.

Back of our elevated position Mustapha continues to rise to El-Biar (The Well), culminating at Bouzareah, which is about 1250 feet above the sea.

From this point one enjoys a glorious view of the Mediterranean and surrounding country. A sketch is given to show the relative positions of the environs. A stands for Algiers, which slopes down away from us over the nose of the promontory to the harbor, H. Mustapha Supérieur is shown by two B's, and Mustapha Inférieur by C's; also the Champ de Manœuvres and race-course; D, El-Biar; E, Bouzareah; F, an unattractive suburb, St. Eugène, cold and damp in winter, for it faces north, hot and dusty and without shade in summer; G, Cape Matifou; I, Jardin d'Essai; J, Djurdjura; K, the Kasbah, or citadel, which overlooks the town (an immense wall built of brick and stone, running down to the sea on either side of the ridge, protected the Algerines from inland incursions); L, Fort l'Empereur, named after the emperor Charles V., whose camp was pitched there.



WALLS OF THE KASBAH.

The great walls of the fort and of the Kasbah are half hidden in some places by tall eucalyptus-trees, which feed and thrive on miasma that is death to man.

CHAPTER III.

POPULAR ALGIERS.

BELKASSEM marked me as a *saouarr* on my first return to the town from Mustapha with the necessary paraphernalia for sketching, familiar nowadays to the natives of many an out-of-the-way place. He offered his services as model or guide; and as I was seeking what I might devour in the way of a bit of useful background, and was particularly anxious to see interior life, and gain access to houses and their terraces, I took advantage of the offer of the Arab in his character of guide, and followed him up narrow streets and through whitewashed tunnels to ramshackle doors hung in the most primitive manner, with big round-headed and ornamented nails in various designs, and furnished with elaborate brass knockers.

These knockers must have been intended for foreign callers. The Arab's custom of knocking at the door is as primitive as the hinges; he pounds away with the fist until some one of the inmates answers. A man or boy may come to the door; but a woman either emits a decidedly audible scream from the inner court, or she pokes her head through a window just big enough, or peeps over a terrace wall (concealing her features, of course) to question the caller as to his name and object. The outer door is very frequently left wide open, but the houses, with few exceptions, are constructed with sufficient

ingenuity to prevent passers-by from seeing anything but a blank wall and a little vestibule turning at a right angle. Occasionally, however, one's curiosity is rewarded by a glimpse of the inner court, neatly paved with little six-sided red tiles, with here and there a valuable square of ancient marble or faïence let into the door-sill or the "dado"; slender oleander boughs, or the tortuous branches of a fig-tree, throw shadows in delicate patterns across the pavement, and a thread of sunlight finds its way into an inner chamber. The artist is grateful for this blunder of the architect, or for the coquetry of the inhabitants who may intentionally leave this narrow vista, which is especially probable in the case where the owner of the dwelling is a courtesan. But in no case whatsoever is an outsider expected to enter without knocking. Should an Arab walk into a respectable neighbor's house he would run the greatest risk of being stabbed; but he would no more think of doing so than we would recognize the propriety of a gentleman walking deliberately into a lady's bedroom.

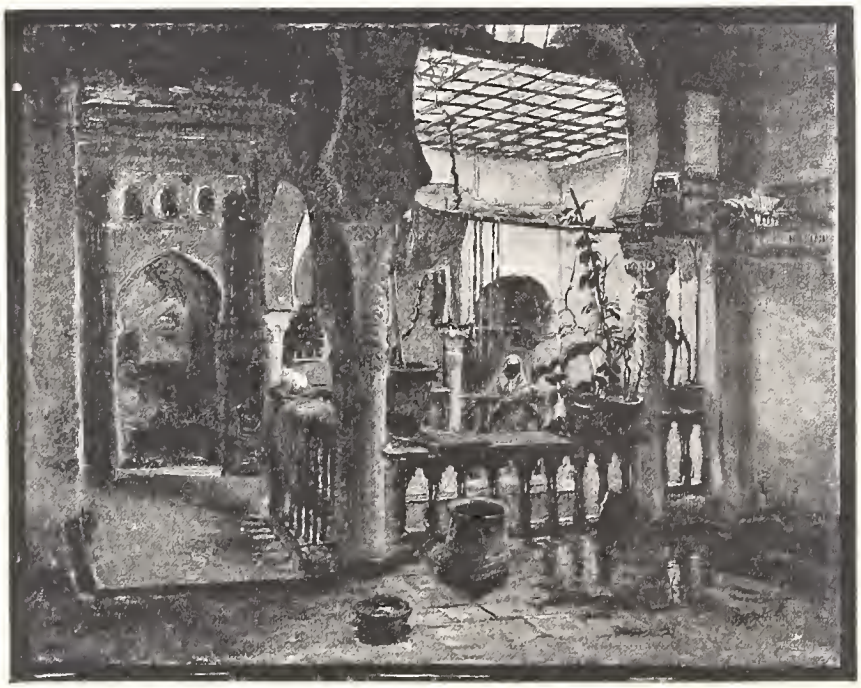
"Baïa! Baïa!"

"Eh! who's there?"

"Belkassem, with a sidi saouarr [gentleman artist]. Will you open the door to us?"

Baïa had ingenuity enough, as I afterwards learned, to conceal by the mattress of her divan a hole in the floor through which she could see visitors who knocked at the street door. The house was of the smallest possible dimensions, and had been whitewashed and bluëwashed so often that the original forms of the columns and masonry had become round, and all the details filled up. Beautiful tiles are often thus found completely concealed, as well as marble columns with well-finished capitals and of good design. The bucket of lime and enormous brush on the end of a long pole go blindly to work

once a year at least, about the 1st of May, and smear every surface alike, brick, plaster, tile, or wood. Ample proof of this much-to-be-regretted custom is found in most of the charming Arab villas which have been bought and restored by foreign residents. There may be no two houses alike, but there



THE NUTSHELL; OR, BAÏA'S HOUSE.

is so much resemblance in the general character of the buildings huddled together in the old town that a description of Baïa's will suffice to show the accommodations for families of the middle and poorer classes. And by these classes is really meant all Algiers within the fortified walls; for the best ancient houses of the wealthy Algerines, beginning with the Dey, have been converted into public museums, libraries, palaces for the governor and archbishop, dwellings for officers, and barracks for the soldiers. In fact, all the residences worth having,

both in the town and suburbs, were confiscated by the French on their taking possession of the country, and given to officials of the Government, most of whom sold them, not being able to keep up such expensive establishments and grounds. A few fine villas here and there in the environs have again fallen into the hands of wealthy natives.

The "regulation" Arab house is always commenced in the same way; whatever the shape of the lot of ground is, there must be a square court, sometimes with a fountain in the centre and a colonnade surrounding the court; the smallest columns, one at each corner, with ornamented balustrade between them, support the upper story on horseshoe arches, with a repetition of the same number of columns and arches supporting the roof; then rooms, of every conceivable shape, to suit the convenience of the owner and to make the best of every inch of the lot, are built around the court, the doors and windows, with iron gratings, opening into it; the outer wall forms a kind of fortress, with few and very small windows. The Arabs as well as the English can say that "a man's house is his castle." In the large country houses the same rule is observed on a larger scale and with more columns, with a very extensive outer court enclosed by a long colonnade and wall. Baïa's house was of the most modest order, a mere nutshell; a court seven feet by four was converted once a week into an extensive laundry, where Fatma, a jovial and good-natured negress, was in her element. Under the stair-way, just wide enough for one, was a well, next to which was a tiny room, which received light only from the court. The lame and lonely specimen of female humanity to whom this room was rented did all her cooking at the door, and when she was fortunate enough to afford to fry anything like a mutton-chop I was obliged to leave my easel for the time being.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE.

BAÏA'S nutshell became my working headquarters for the winter. I was always so well received after my first visit that I made a pecuniary arrangement, which allowed me to reserve a corner for my canvases, box, etc. The necessity of such an understanding with the people with whom we are now dealing is well known, but every one is not acquainted with their traits of distrust, especially in their dealings with each other. Now, I thought that the conditions of my partial habitation were well established, but at the end of the week, while I was working on the terrace, Belkassem appeared on the scene below-stairs and began mumbling and grumbling about money matters. His object was to obtain from Baïa a percentage on the sums which I had stipulated to pay her for every day's work in her house, and he was waylaying me to get another percentage for having shown me the way. It was natural enough for him to expect a reward, and I was happy to acknowledge his aid; but a new pretext every day to see how my "portraits" of the house were progressing, with the same object in view, became so tiresome that the woman of the house requested the wily Arab to let me alone and to keep away, which he wisely decided to do. He remained friendly nevertheless.

While working on the terrace one afternoon (my favorite

place, being unmolested in the shadow of the high house of a neighbor, completely surrounded and enveloped in whites—yellow, gray, blue, green, and pink whites—delicious whites in shadow, of those refined tones so terrible to do justice to on canvas, and with which one must wrestle) I was attracted to

BAÏA AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

the parapet of the terrace to see the cause of the crush and noise of a crowd in our little street, which was a *cul-de-sac*. A number of people, some angry, some roaring with laughter, were following an Arab who was carrying his wife home in his arms, very much against her will; she was so energetic in her resistance, and he so determined, that his turban and bur-

noose, and her haïk, veil, and long black hair were flying to the winds. He was calm of countenance and said nothing, but walked along firmly; she did all the gesticulating, struggling, and protesting, until they came to a door with a large knocker, to which, seeing a chance of escape, she clung, and he could not, with all his efforts, make her let go. The women of the house to which the door was the entrance were friends of hers, and hearing the unusual mode of tapping, rushed quickly to open. They took in the situation at a glance, and it now became the husband's turn to let go his hold. Her friends received the wife, and shut the door and locked it in the husband's face. They all then repaired to their terrace opposite me, and after lengthy explanations they had a good laugh, drank coffee, and threw the dregs into the street in the direction of the husband, who had got the worst of it.

LITTLE ZOHR.

Baïa was a widow of about thirty years of age, and she had a daughter, Zohr, seven years old, who was as agile as a cat and as restless as a hyena in a cage — not a beautiful comparison, perhaps, for a very pretty child, but I can think of nothing more hopelessly "on the go" than the unsympathetic animal above mentioned—I mean the hyena. At one moment Zohr was hanging over the balustrade of the court, now on the terrace of a neighbor throwing water on the boys in the street, then again putting her dolls with "Joli Coco," the parrot, to bed; the sluggish blood of a warm climate had not yet taken

possession of her veins. Baïa's mother was a kind soul, who passed her time in cooking for a French family, and in embroidering, between meals, either long strips for curtains or square covers for cushions and tables. Baïa had posed for artists a good deal; but since, with her youth on the wane,

BADROULBOUDOUR.

that lucrative occupation had become rarer, she gave her attention to weaving silk and woollen braid at three sous a yard. Women friends were continually "dropping in," and seeing me there at work so often, they considered me as one of

the family, and raised the veils from their faces and made themselves at home generally. A certain tall and savage-looking beauty, laden with jewellery—Queen of Sheba, we will call her—was a frequent visitor; but on account of a tremendous mistake on her part, which raised my ire to a high pitch, she "dropped out" for several weeks. At any rate, she did not show herself during my working hours for that length of time, owing to a scolding which I gave vent to in the presence of the whole family, for I was not sure of the guilty one, though I had my suspicions. I had brought back a large and finished study, painted in the interior of a mosque, of a saint's tomb profusely ornamented and hung with flags and banners. I had protected the fresh canvas in the usual way by another one—the length of which was the same as the breadth of the study—with drawing-pins between, so that the two surfaces should not touch, and a strap to hold them together. During my absence at mid-day breakfast the Queen of Sheba had gazed upon the picture of the tomb of Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman, and had strapped the canvases together again without the necessary space left between them. Oh, agonizing moment! When shall I recover from the pang of finding my sketch "retouched" in this manner? But the little storm in the nutshell subsided, I repaired the tomb, and the experience was not to be so much regretted after all, as it insured my peace of mind ever after, for my traps were never touched again.

"Badroulboudour" was a charming and timid girl, known to me by that name as one who might, through my imagination, impersonate Aladdin's Princess. Besides her portrait, she figures in the accompanying sketch of a garden at El-Biar.

Baïa was extremely neat, and once a week everything was turned out for a thorough house-cleaning; buckets of water deluged the tiled floors of the court and under the little col-

onnade, while a mop was used for the bedrooms, which were also tiled. Wood is seldom employed in the construction of floors, as tiles are cooler in summer, do not warp, are more ornamental, and cheaper. Her old mother abominated shoes, and to see her assist in the general washing up on cold and rainy days, going barefooted about the house on the cheerless tiles, sent a chill to my very marrow. To acknowledge and

IN A GARDEN AT EL-BIAR, ALGIERS.

return my sympathy, she expressed her discomfort at seeing me at work in a big overcoat and thick-soled boots. When I went to see our friend Belkassem at home with his family, the rain was pouring into the open court of his dwelling, and his five children were standing about on their bare feet like forlorn wet chickens; the mother with a babe in her arms was afflicted, like all her little brood, with sore eyes.

CHAPTER V.

COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS.

IT is a strange fact that many of the natives of hot countries wear almost the same clothing winter and summer, and do not seem to suffer from cold, even in the severest weather, when the thermometer stands at a few degrees above the freezing-point. Arab women are always curious to see how European ladies are dressed, and examine attentively their clothes and jewellery. If the Europeans show the same interest, and inquire into the dressing of the natives, they often find, to their surprise, on cold days, on lifting the haïk of a Moorish woman, nothing but a gauze chemise, and a thin cotton bodice covering the breasts and a very small part of the back, and, from the waist to the feet, cotton pantaloons—ample, it is true, but not warm. The women's haïks are often made of hand-woven wool, very thick and warm, others of silk, while the poorer classes wear a few yards of thin white cotton stuff. The large haïks are about eighteen feet long by five feet wide. With one of these, with their veil to the eyes and falling about fourteen inches, and with pantaloons made up of seventeen yards of white cotton tied at the waist and ankles, the reader will have but little difficulty in understanding how they can conceal their figures and keep themselves warm. But such ample drapery is comparative luxury, and enjoyed by the wealthy only. On the other hand, one pities

them in hot weather for being obliged to wear the veil, and follow the fashion of burdening their frames with such a weight of apparel.

Despite all this drapery the women's husbands and acquaintances readily recognize them by their bearing and gait—but one can form no idea, or a very inaccurate one, of a woman from what the exterior forms suggest. And what a damper to one's conjectures to discover that a lustrous pair of the deepest brown eyes, softened and enhanced by kohl-blackened lashes, belong to a coarse and vulgar face twenty years older than it ought to be. Happily the reverse is—I will not say often, for beauty is rare—sometimes the case. An outward indication of age with the women is the breadth of their pantaloons, which is much diminished as the wearers grow older.

JEWESS OF ALGIERS.

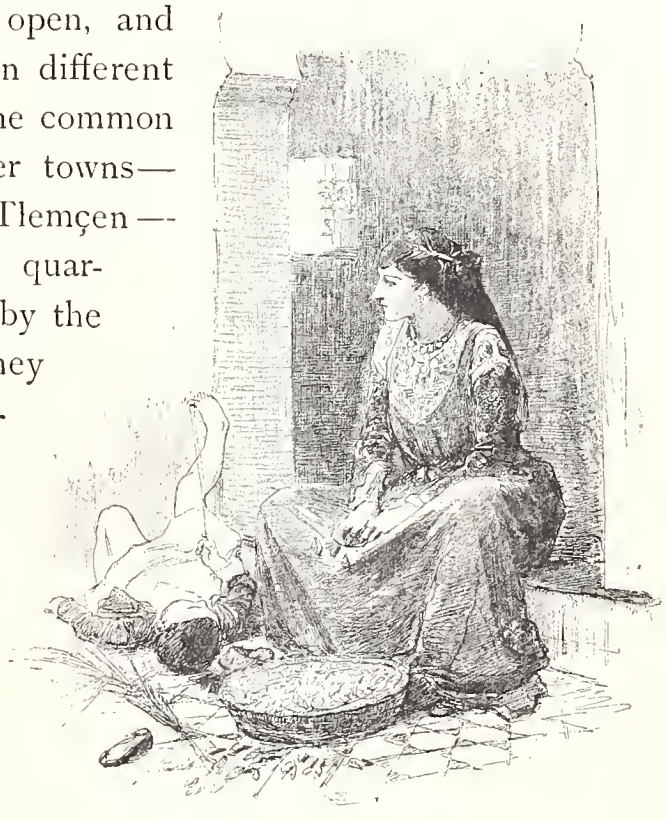
The street costume of the women is always white, varying considerably in tone according to the material; small stripes of blue or pink silk are occasionally seen in the haïk. The ample pantaloons are put on over others of colored prints or silk brocades, which are worn at home and are much narrower. Large anklets filled with shot (*khankhal*) jingle as they move about. Their slippers are of pale yellow, white, brown, or black patent-leather, and the height of fashion is to wear everything of the same color; for

instance, yellow head kerchief bordered with gold and silk fringe, yellow ribbons to ornament the thin chemise, yellow silk bodice, pantaloons of the same color, and yellow leather slippers. The rest of the costume is white. But these gala dresses were not those which we found most picturesque; for too much European influence is felt in the colors and in the cut of the garments, in the same way that cheap, crude, and perishable dyes have found their way into modern carpets of Eastern make. The more ordinary kind of costume, worn every day, hanging in loose folds, and showing the lithe and lazy forms beneath, is more suited to an artist's brush.

The same can be said of the Jewesses' costumes. Stretching their clothes-lines on the house-tops, or lounging about the shops, they are handsome and charming (except when uncleanliness predominates too strongly); but when they walk on Saturdays with their shapeless India shawls, thin black head kerchief worn as if glued to the forehead—in fact, gum is used to keep it in place—and white veil tied under the chin and in a knot on the top of the head, they are *not* fine for all their finery. The colors they wear are sometimes lovely and the material is good—black velvet gowns, jackets of stamped velvet, or brocade with gold or silver design; but then again they will destroy your faith in their good taste by putting on kerchiefs and braid of the crudest and most vivid colors, and consequently out of harmony with everything—intermediate blues and greens that set one's teeth on edge. We say intermediate, for the two colors mentioned may be very beautiful, especially when pale or dark, or subtly toned, but they can assert themselves, when they *are* raw and salient, to a greater extent than any others, except, perhaps, their first cousin, magenta.

The houses of the lower classes of Jews are generally

filthy; even the glazed tile floors and walls, which are so easily washed, disappear entirely under accumulated dirt, and the disorder in their living-rooms is impossible to describe. The compensation for this repulsive element is that strangers are politely received, and artists are allowed to make sketches in any part of their dwellings, which differ but little from Arab constructions. All their doors are left wide open, and several families live in different rooms looking into one common court. In many other towns—Oran, Constantine, Tlemçen—there are streets and quarters entirely occupied by the Jews; in Algiers they seem to be more scattered.



YOUNG JEWESS AT HOME.

Friday is the Arab's Sunday, but it does not interfere much with his worldly business unless he chooses. Then Saturday is the Jew's Sabbath; and then comes our Sunday, on which day the French workman continues to work, in order to take at least a half-holiday on Monday. Accordingly there are four days out of the seven when the visitor to Algiers runs the risk of finding a shop closed or a workman not at his post.

The Beni-Mzab, or Mozabites, although Arabs and Mohammedans, form a class almost as distinctly separate as the

Jews. Like the latter, they are money-makers, and carry on commerce extensively throughout the whole colony, and are disliked for their thrift almost as much as the Jews by the Arabs, for each and every one of them, it is said, is industrious. Originally from Syria, they wear a costume which differs from that of their Mussulman brethren, particularly in one garment, that is, the *gaudoura*, which is square in shape, sleeveless, a little longer than broad, reaching to the knees, with large openings for the arms, and one for the head. The material is wool, thickly and tightly woven, and in a great variety of stripes, very large and very narrow, with lozenge, zigzag, and comb-shaped ornamentation in the weaving. Joseph's coat of many colors was undoubtedly very like this garment.

The Mozabite's ambition is to grow rich, and to retire to his native country, situated more than a hundred miles beyond El-Aghouat, which in itself is at the end of all things—that is, at the limit of a hard journey of four or five days far into the Sahara. Now, this country, which he longs to reach, and where he hopes to end his days, is one of the strangest regions on the face of the earth, according to the account given by Commandant Coÿne. The most arid and burning stretch of desert surrounds an oasis called by the Arabs Hammada (the scorched) and Chebka (the net), because it resembles an immense net of rocks and black grotto shell-work. It seems so far away, and the ambition of the Mzab so unaccountable, that one is reminded of the Arabian Nights' tales.

"About in the centre of the Chebka," Commandant Coÿne tells us, "is a kind of circus formed of a belt of shining calcareous rock, with very steep slopes towards the interior. Two gaps at the north-west and south-east let the river—the Oued-Mzab—pass. This circus of about eighteen kilometres [eleven miles] in length by two kilometres broad, at most, en-

closes five cities (three of which, it is said, are as large as Algiers) of the Mozabite confederation and their land, the whole of which the inhabitants of this valley have changed into highly cultivated gardens. Seen from the exterior and from the north and east, this belt of rocks presents the appearance of an agglomeration of *khoubas* [marabouts' tombs], in stories one above the other, without any kind of order, and looks like an immense Arab necropolis. Nature itself seems dead. No trace of vegetation reposes the eye; even the birds of prey seem to fly from these desolate regions. The implacable sun alone throws his rays on these walls of rock of a whitish gray color, and produces by their shadows the most fantastic designs. But what is the astonishment—I may say, the enthusiasm—of the traveller when, having reached the summit of this line of rocks, he discovers in the interior of the circus five populous cities, surrounded by gardens of luxuriant vegetation, relieved in dark green against the reddish background of the river-bed of the Mzab. Around him the barren desert—death; at his feet, life and evident proof of an advanced civilization."

Mzab is a republic, or rather a commune; there are no poor nor beggars; all the citizens belong to the police department, and they are so jealous of their country and suspicious of strangers that in some of the cities they will not allow a foreigner to stay overnight. There are schools everywhere, and they all know how to read and write, and every child is made to help in agriculture.

In letters of Cardinal Lavigerie* we find the following account of the former religion of the Mozabites and of the *Kabyles* and *Touaregs*, tribes which we shall mention in the second part of this work:

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* "Lettre sur la Mission du Sahara." Œuvres choisies. Poussielgue, 1884.

"At the time of the Mussulman invasion in Africa, a great number of Christian families were transported by force into the depths of Arabia. All those who remained were obliged to surrender their plains and valleys to their Mussulman vanquishers, and, in order to escape death, to take refuge in the wild and uncultivated ravines of the Atlas or beyond the hills of sand in the oases of the Sahara.

"In the northern ranges these ancient masters of Africa took the name, little by little, of *Kabyles;* in the oases of the desert they called themselves Mozabites and Touaregs; but they all preserved their national language [the Berber], their civil tradition, and for hundreds of years their ancient religion.

"Fourteen times, so says the Arab historian Ebn Khaldoun, these people were forced to apostasy; fourteen times they returned to Christianity, until at last, the sacerdotal office having been gradually destroyed, Catholicism could no longer be maintained. . . . After the XIVth century no mention is made of the existence of Christian communities in this country by any of the historians or Arab travellers who speak of Northern Africa."

Monseigneur Lavigerie is actively engaged at the present moment in establishing missions and schools in Central Africa, with a view to calling these apostates back to Catholicism through persuasion, education, and charity.

The Kabyles are possibly amenable, but scarcely the Touaregs, the dreaded pirates of the desert, who live only by their evil deeds.

The Director of the Museum and Library of Algiers showed me a photograph of a chief among them who a few years since had made himself notorious by committing a vile deed of treachery against an esteemed missionary. This worthy propagator of our faith had caused the chief to be imprisoned for some

misdemeanor and deprived him of his weapons—spears, knives, and swords. The culprit did not seem to care how long he was detained in prison, but he mourned as if for a son the loss of his cherished damaskeened cimeter, a venerated heirloom handed down from generation to generation. He begged that this weapon, if no other, be restored to him after the expiration of his term of imprisonment, which he promised to endure patiently, however long it might be.

THE MISSIONARY'S ESCORT.

So penitent did he seem that in a short time he regained his liberty, and when his sword was returned to him he fell on his knees and prayed forgiveness of the missionary, and pledged himself for his future safety, if the good man would consent to accept the protection of his strong right arm. The missionary trusted him and took him, together with other chosen children of the desert, as his escort to new fields of Christian labor. He was butchered by them in cold blood. A few companions and fellow-believers of the missionary shared his fate. Mohammedanism has a strong hold on these apostates.

CHAPTER VI.

NEIGHBORS.

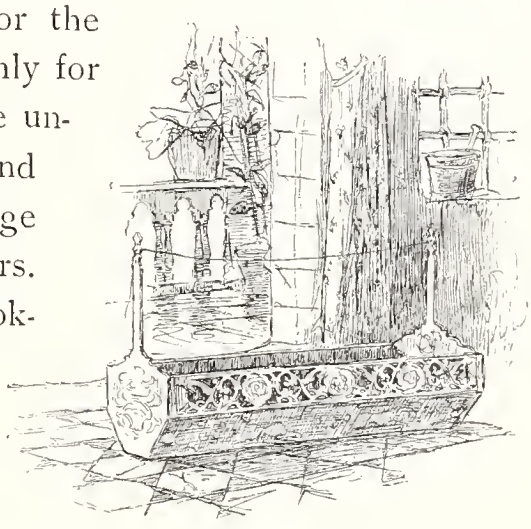
ALGIERS, as I have said, looks like a great irregular stair-way of terraces, blind and blank under the sunshine. Years ago, under Turkish government, the terraces were frequented by the Moorish women alone, who visited each other by climbing over the parapets dividing the houses, and during the day no Christian male except the consuls was allowed to go even on his own terrace.

There is difficulty now in gaining access to the roofs, and Baïa used to caution me against looking over the walls into other courts; but one might as well leave a boy with a caution under a fine apple-tree. Not that I disobeyed on purpose, but it was impossible to move about without seeing the neighbors, and that without any effort or prying.

Baïa's bedroom looked on to the colonnade and the high doors were always open, but when a curtain was dropped it meant the same as shutting the doors and bolting them; for the Arabs are very strict about their customs, and a flimsy curtain can be trusted for privacy as well as a strong wooden barrier.

Here a "weeny" divan was made with three mattresses, four feet by two, forming three sides of a square, with cushions at the back. Visitors were received here, and it was astonishing to see the number her "parlor" would accommodate, as well

as the quantity of coffee the frugal hostess could squeeze out of her copper coffee-pot—a Brobdingnagian thimble. The bed was modern, and an exception to the old Arab custom; but in the room opposite, which was occupied by her old mother, father, and Zohr, the mattresses were spread on the floor. At Biskra I have seen blankets seven yards in length by two and a half wide, in which a whole family, babies and all, find comfort for the night. I have one of these, only for studio requirements it must be understood, made by hand, and woven with all sorts of lozenge and square designs in all colors.



ZOHR'S CRADLE.

Baïa's father was a good-looking and gentlemanly old man, grave and dignified, as well-bred Arabs always are. He spent the day in his little shop, for it is not beneath the dignity of this people to gain their livelihood by occupying a little pen four feet square and not high enough to stand erect in. Descendants of the best blood, in fact, are often found among merchants in a small way, who sell a few yards of calico, eggs and butter, orange-flower water, and for one sou apiece strings of orange-blossoms, with an occasional red geranium attached. These latter are worn by the women round their heads like a turban, for adornment as well as for the pleasant perfume.

Next to a commercial grandee of this description you will find a patriarch versed in the Koran, and possessing the power of writing extracts from the book of the Prophet, and through them, and his own venerated mediation, of insuring the indi-

vidual—made happy possessor of the valuable document by paying a few sous—against disease, bad luck, the evil-eye, and innumerable misfortunes. The patriarch spends most of his time seated on a well-worn cushion at the entrance of his "sanctuary," with his pipe, pen, and inkstand by his side, gazing up the street for hours, muttering over his chaplet as he runs the beads through his fingers, and mumbling a Salaam-Alek to passing friends.

A charming old acquaintance of mine, near whose sanctified abode I made several studies and took refuge when it rained, seemed to have, perhaps three times a week, in writing these charms on eggs an extensive practice at one sou each. I can assure the reader that I worked near him on two consecutive mornings from half-past eight till noon, and can testify to watching but one job, which was to write a charm on an egg while an old woman waited for it. I am sorry that I did not ask the exact translation; but the phrase, in all probability, was intended to insure the freshness of her treasure until the old lady reached home, and thereby thwart the evil practices of the grocer from whom she bought it. A short time after the old woman with her egg had left the scribe, I was somewhat surprised at seeing pass like a flash between the canvas upon which I was at work and my nose, and smash at my feet, a good-sized squash, the mushy remains of which went splashing and spattering down the steep street. The evil intentions of the boy who threw this esteemed vegetable at my head were evidently frustrated, as he had neglected to have a charm written on it in order to attain his object.

These charms are more frequently written on paper, to be folded and enclosed in amulets, which are generally square or triangular in shape, and made of silk, leather, and tin. As they believe in the efficacy of these scraps of paper, so are

WOMEN AT THE FOUNTAIN OF ABD-EL-RHAMAN.

they superstitious about paper generally; they object, for instance, to going before French authorities to settle their grievances against each other, preferring verbal discussions of their case in presence of their cadi, for they fear that all sorts of harmful words may be written — besides the name of God — and subsequently used to their condemnation. Children wear the charms round the neck or tied to their cap; men and women wear them on their person, sometimes above the elbow, and in their garments; horses have them attached to the band passing across their chest, to protect them from the evil-eye. Those worn by the women of the higher and wealthy classes are enclosed in richly engraved cases of gold and silver, and suspended to chains slung over the shoulder and passing round the waist; they add greatly to the richness of their costume, and form part of their wealth.

"Tell me, Baïa, what you do when you fall ill. I suppose you call in a doctor?"

"Oh no! The men may do so when they are sick, and our Arab doctors are far superior to the French, but we women go to the marabout. He writes a few words from certain chapters in the Koran, such as these: 'God is the best protector. He is the most merciful of those who show mercy;' or, 'A guard against every rebellious devil,' etc. This paper we chew and swallow, and with a little water which he gives us from the sacred well of the mosque of Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman, we need no more, and in a few days we recover."

There had recently been, however, a striking instance of a woman who had made pilgrimages to consult all the marabouts of the surrounding country, and had probably chewed up a small stationer's supply of foolscap, besides alum, hobnails, burnt corks, and other efficacious remedies administered by old midwives and sorceresses, as well as drinking the sa-

cred water aforesaid, without recovering. The kind of relief she obtained at their hands caused others besides the original disorder. After much suffering on her part, her husband—for he was the difficult customer to manage—was urged to call in a French surgeon, and after demurring for some time, in order that the burnt corks and holy waters might have one more chance to assert their healing powers, finally consented to allow "a dog of a Christian," the surgeon, the privilege of seeing his wife. Certain conditions, however, were to be observed by the Christian; one of them was that the patient should partially conceal her face. I am told that she whimpered and screamed, to express her horror at the idea of receiving such a stranger in her bedroom; but these emotions were in keeping with her education, which teaches her to "assume a virtue" in the presence of her husband, through fear of him more than from a sense of modesty. In another place I shall refer to this trait in the character of the women, who, sometimes very handsome and gorgeously gotten up, were only too glad to pull aside their white silken haïk, raise their veil, and enter into conversation with others than their husband, when the chance occurred and the place was safe.

In his valuable work on "The Modern Egyptians," Mr. Lane says, on the subject of charms:

"The most approved mode of charming away sickness or disease is to write certain passages of the Kuran on the inner surface of an earthenware cup or bowl; then to pour in some water, and stir it until the writing is quite washed off, when the water, with the sacred words thus infused in it, is to be drunk by the patient. These words are as follows: 'And he will heal the breasts of the people who believe;' ch. ix., v. 14. 'Wherein is a remedy for men;' ch. xlv., v. 71, etc., etc. Similar virtues are ascribed to a charm composed of the names

of the 'As-hab El-Kahf' (or Companions of the Cave, also called the Seven Sleepers) together with the name of their dog. These, it is said, were Christian youths of Ephesus, who took refuge from the persecution of the Emperor Decius in a cave, and slept there, guarded by their dog, for the space of three hundred years. The names are sometimes engraved in the bottom of a drinking-cup, and more commonly on the round tray of tinned copper which, placed on a stool, forms the table for dinner, supper," etc.

The incongruity and inconsistency of superstition is very noticeable in the case cited above, where the charm is attributed by Moslems to the names of the "Seven Sleepers," who are Christians, and to the virtues of

> "A sect they are taught to hate,
> And are delighted to decapitate,"

whenever the opportunity presents itself. By a similar freak they also do honor to the dog, the faithful guardian of the same Christians. Needless to say that with the Arab "Christian," "dog," and "Jew" are terms synonymous with villain, blackguard, sneak, and cheat. "Emshi Rooah, ya kelb!" (Clear out, begone, you dog!), is an anathema for our benefit, my Christian brethren, when a Moslem has come to the point where he is willing to risk, in our hearing, the solidity of his cranium and the flexibility of his jawbone. The hatred which exists between Arab and Jew is very marked, and "Youdi" (damned Jew) is a term that he reserves for one of that race, and uses also when he wishes to exhaust, in one ejaculation, his vocabulary of curses against a member of his own persuasion. Concerning different religions, I was once told that the Jews were bad, and would never be forgiven by the Moslems, for they ought to know better, but that the Arabs felt

charitable towards the poor deluded Christians, for they did the best they knew how, and would find a certain amount of compassion from the Almighty.

"The custom among the Arab men of allowing a tuft of hair to grow on the crown of the head," Mr. Lane tells us, "the rest of the head being shaved, is said to have originated in the fear that if a Moslem should fall into the hands of an infidel and be killed, the unbeliever might cut off the head of his victim, and, finding no hair by which to hold it, put his impure hand into the mouth in order to carry it." Another version is that the tuft will be convenient to take hold of on the day of resurrection. When Arabs are beheaded, which to them is the most terrible death, as the body does not go entire before the great and final tribunal, friends come forward to the guillotine to ask permission to put the head and body together; for the head and body are thrown by this lugubrious engine of destruction into separate baskets.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STREETS.

I REMEMBER a certain dealer in charcoal and kindling-wood. His stock in trade was of appalling multiplicity, and yet nothing appeared to be worth buying: half a dozen bundles of charcoal, each of which could be carried in a man's hat and bound with a wisp of alfa-grass—wire salad-strainers, eggs in one of them, and a long feather, which used to be white, in the other—all this merchandise was shown at the door. Inside the emporium stood a counter made of one board and supported on three columns, formed of a large broken oil-jar, sardine-boxes, and tin cans, which had contained "oiliness" of some kind. As to what was above the counter, on it, under it, and hanging from the ceiling, let my reader imagine it by recalling to his memory what he has seen in the way of a collection of useless rubbish at some fourth-class auction sale. These cherished stores had remained undisturbed for months and years, and the effect of a uniform cloud of charcoal-siftings which lay upon them may be imagined. Oh, what harmony in blacks, how various they were on the greasy jars and cans, and how the spiders did haul the flies "over the coals!" And the dealer, what was he like? A sickly and dusty-complexioned Moslem of the lower class, crouching in a narrow alcove, and snoozing all day long, only rousing himself from his torpor on hearing the yells of a cus-

tomer, or to go and buy a one sou loaf of bread, a cup of sour milk, and a few dry dates to keep soul and body together. I made studies from his threshold, and witnessed a business transaction provoked by a moaning old woman.

The bargain was a long struggle between poverty and misery for three sous' worth of charcoal; the hag finally took a franc from one corner of her handkerchief and anxiously waited for the change, which the merchant brought to light

OLD FOUNTAIN, RUE BAB-EL-OUED, ALGIERS.

from a gourd in which he fished until he found, among rusty nails, dried orange-peel, and French soldiers' buttons, seven sous green with verdigris; then, to make up the franc, he needed ten sous, which he happened to have in silver. This coin had been hidden in a small porcelain hair-pomade pot, and would not be induced to come forth without the aid of an antiquated reed-pen. Now, this subject, badly fed, clothed in dirt and rags, sleeping at nights (as well as during the greater part of the day) in his den, paid rental, taxes, and the

fee for his license, besides gaining a livelihood and permanent shelter. He was a peg above the street vender of whom one sees pitiable examples. A decrepit old man, or miserable woman with hollow eye and sunken cheek, will spread on a remnant of a meal-bag or matting, on the stone pavement of the street, in the same spot and day after day, a very limited stock of vegetables—a string of onions, a handful of leeks, a few scraps of henna, and a block or two of gray rock-salt.

In a certain street there are a dozen of these venders, and every morning a receiver of taxes makes his round and collects from each one the sum of two sous; and he has to fight for it, for they seldom pay without protest. Continuing to examine the grades of poverty on a descending scale, we come to the nonentity who does nothing, eats next to nothing, but exists by begging. "Ana meskeen!" (I am poor; please, sir, a little sou!) And yet the wretches will seldom consent to pose for an artist or photograper, so great is their superstition and their fear of abuse at the hands of their fellows. A miserable specimen of humanity hobbled past a photographer one day and mumbled in Arabic, "If he takes my portrait, I'll smash his machine!" In fact, it may be said that in Arab streets the "camera is mightier than the cannon." The sight of a glistening lens glaring from under a black cloth strikes terror into an Arab's soul.

CHAPTER VIII.

INCIDENTAL CHARACTERIZATION.

AMONG the pure-blooded Algerines you must not expect to find men of a business turn of mind, strictly speaking. The shop is, for a blue blood, his place of rendezvous for his friends; he sees and hears everything that transpires, and it gives him an occupation; he puts a fixed price on his goods, and listens to no beating down; or if he accepts an offer, it is with indifference; if he refuses, he waves his hand and says, or means, "La-la" (No; you can't have it). The Jews and Syrians keep the larger shops, and always ask a very much higher price for their goods than they are willing to take. I will record only one anecdote of this system of negotiation in an exaggerated form, practised in this case by an Arab, who had learned the tricks of the trade. The Place du Gouvernement and the arcades in front of the cafés were his places of business. From his basket and shoulder he would offer, say a *gandoura* (gown worn under the burnoose), a pair of boots of red leather, and an ostrich-feather fan.

"Forty-five francs each, one hundred and thirty-five francs for all three."

"Don't want them; have plenty of such."

"Here, you good gentleman, I go to Biskra to-morrow; take all for one hundred—eighty—sixty;" and so on down to

twenty-five for the lot. I believe his trip to Biskra has not yet come off; but I made a bargain because the articles were thrust upon me.

For more business-like transactions the Rue Porte Neuve is one of the most interesting streets. It is enlivened by

RUE DU DIABLE, ALGIERS.

the sound of hundreds of shoemakers' hammers, but the energetic workmen are mostly French, Maltese, Italian, and Spanish. The shoes they make are almost entirely for the Arab market; broad, and without heels, they scarcely cover the toes, and if the heel and toes touch the shoes at the ends the purchaser considers himself satisfied as to fit; corns and

in-growing nails are of no consequence; he shuffles his feet out and in on entering and leaving the mosques; so does he in cafés and at home.

The café has been so often described and painted that I will confine myself to one of its specialties—that is, the game of draughts. With a great deal of practice and study the Arab plays the game well; he scarcely makes a move without rubbing two fingers on the square where he intends placing his "man," and when he breaks through the ranks of his adversary and arrives at the back row, thereby converting his "man" into a "king," the "man" is never crowned, but is remembered by both players. Whether his form be that of an old cork, button, or chip, the "man" is sent tottering about on the worn and uneven surface of the board, the squares of which are rudely cut in relief.

The inmates of the café will play at draughts, or look on for hours—we might as well say for years, and be done with it. No remark is ever made by the Arab about the balmy atmosphere, the sunlight, and the blue sky, which make such a strong impression on the mental and physical organization of the northerner; neither does he express any appreciation of the beautiful aspects of nature; cold, heat, rain, or shine is all the same to him. He strolls about in a pelting rain with calm indifference, wrapped in a hand-woven burnoose, almost waterproof, or sits for weeks in silent resignation until the storm has passed. An umbrella carried by him is as much out of place as it would be in the hands of a soldier or a policeman, and yet many have adopted it. The hard-working man finds comfort in soldiers' old red pantaloons which he picks up, very second-hand, at the Place de Chartres, where one sees cargoes of cast-off clothing unpacked from cases just arrived from Europe.

NEAR THE KASBAH, ALGIERS.

Fortunately these articles are to be worn threadbare, mostly by colonists and other Europeans, and the Arab is still left at least with his ample burnoose, a dignified *cache-misère*, which covers anything like an incongruous pea-jacket.

We are inclined to imagine that the Arab is more graceful and of more noble bearing than other human beings; but divest him of his long flowing burnoose and turban of many folds and turns, then dress him in cap or straw hat, tight trousers, shoes, and cutaway coat, and you will see that "*C'est l'habit qui fait le moine.*" Or, to reverse the experiment, clothe a swarthy Italian in burnoose and turban, and you convert a Neapolitan model, organ-grinder, or possible bandit into a silent and mysterious Mohammedan, who seems to be absorbed in whispering recitations from the Koran, and in the contemplation of a projected pilgrimage to Mecca.

Leaving the noise of the shoemakers' hammers below us as we go higher and higher up towards the Kasbah, rising a step in every two yards, we come upon a crowd of burnooses huddled together, closely packed on a long bench in front of a café, others choking up the entrances to little shops. They form a hedge on either side of the street.

A stalwart auctioneer, half smothered in haïks, gandouras, and other second-hand wearing apparel, rushes boisterously back and forth, crying out his last bid, the veins swollen in his neck and temples, and the perspiration rolling down his cheeks.

To the *roumi* (or innocent stranger in a strange land), he is very obsequious and considerate, for he tells him in a most plausible and altogether charming manner that the last bidder repented his rash offer of five dollars for a piece of silk fabric which would be really superfluous in his wardrobe, and was prepared to relinquish all claim on the article in case another customer was found.

"So here it is, monsieur," addressing me; "you can have it for three dollars and one franc fifty centimes."

"But where's the chap who offered five dollars?"

YAMINA OF THE KASBAH.

"Oh, he is not serious; never knows what he wants, and can't pay for it when a thing is sold to him."

"Yes, but how about the next highest bidder?"

"Ah, he has gone away by this time."

"Gone on to Biskra, eh, like the dealer of the Place du Gouvernement?"

All this was simply a ruse to make me believe that the article was cheap. He thought that the uneducated ear of the roumi could not distinguish the difference between *hamsa douros* (five dollars) and *zousch douros* (two dollars), which latter figure was what he was shouting from good sound lungs.

CHAPTER IX.

WHERE I PITCHED MY EASEL.

FOUR o'clock was always a convenient time for me to stop work, as the sun was low, the light in the narrow streets had fled, and the chilliness of the approaching evening was sometimes keenly felt. The old-clothes market was then an unceasing attraction. A certain Ain Kalah,* who is to distinguish himself in a future chapter, was, notwithstanding the error of his ways, a gentleman; tall and graceful, quiet and sympathetic, industrious, and so obliging that he often took from his ample pocket a handful of small silver, from which I was invited to "help myself"—as a loan, of course. Remembering the stalwart auctioneer and his tempting accumulation of stuffs and costumes, the reader will know why I needed loans occasionally. It was all the more generous on the part of Ain Kalah, for he dealt in old clothes as well as in new silk stuffs from his own looms, and I was a constant customer.

This tiny shop was at a convenient angle of the street, within winking range of the energetic crier, and in case of a sudden shower of rain the divan, covered with a gazelle's skin, was a refuge, and coffee and cigarettes were a pastime, aside

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* Ain Kalah was a nickname for Ain-Hharoon, for the former means courtesan with the black eyes.

from the interest which the street afforded. An old woman who had stationed herself at the same corner for forty years, and had sold bread all that time, was still there, sheltered from the storm by an enormous umbrella. Only two small loaves sometimes remained, and yet she would not go until driven away by rain or darkness. Her dwelling may have been a miserable abode, and the street her real home. She was always veiled, and covered to the eyebrows with her heavy woollen haïk. The mere fact of her retaining her position at that very corner for forty years may serve as an indication to the reader, and give him some idea as to where to find the most animated part of the town. Four streets meet at this point, and a door six feet wide might be placed under the archway which connects them. In all probability there was a door in olden times, closed at night to shut off one quarter of the town from another, as was the custom in many Oriental cities.

There were few modern improvements here; and were it not for an occasional gas-lamp of French design, and the names of the streets systematically placed at the corners, and in the French language, one might easily imagine one's self in the midst of a fanatical people, and could single out many a face which would be in keeping with one's preconceived idea of what a cruel enthusiast should look like. Fanatical they may be still, but so many restrictions have been put on their religious ceremonies that they have but little opportunity for showing emotions which they might otherwise betray.

Opposite the old bread-woman was a greasy fritter-bakery, or "fryery," which was a centre of attraction, not only for small boys and old negresses, but for the lover of the dilapidated picturesque. Before attempting to make a study of the bakery, I thought it important to ascertain whether sitting room could

THE GREASY FRITTER-SHOP.

be found, for every inch along the walls of this busy thoroughfare was nicely calculated and occupied.

I had learned one characteristic trait in the prejudices and religious training of the Moor, and that is, he will seldom make objection to your sitting at his door for the purpose of "making images" of things around you, or to your painting his shop, and even the semblance of himself sitting in it; for, so long as you do this of your own accord, and without consulting him, you accept all the responsibility for your actions, and his conscience is clean, inasmuch as he has not sanctioned what he considers sin against his Koran, which upholds to the letter

the commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven image." But if you ask his permission to sit on his threshold in order to work such a black deed as making a study from nature, he will close his eyes and sway his head in such a way that anything like pushing the demand is out of the question. This was the case with a devout and dignified Moor who occupied a stall next to the bread-woman. He had already shaken his head at my proposition to lean my back against the shutters of his house of business in order to paint the "frittery;" but I confess to the perfidy of squeezing myself and paraphernalia between his shutters, his baskets of egg-plant, bags of potatoes, and boxes of mandarins, and the bench of the old woman, who complacently moved as far into the street as prudence would allow. I did this at mid-day, while he was at prayers in the mosque. When he returned and found that my human frame hid only the half of his shop, he seemed very pleased; but when he saw the sketch growing, and the portraits of some of the street folks, he was greatly delighted; for is it not in accordance with the wickedness of human nature to laugh at the expense of fellow-beings? His neighbors had been taken at a disadvantage, and he enjoyed the joke. The Mohammedans' reason for not approving portraiture of any kind is that at the resurrection the author of an imitation of one of God's creatures will be confronted with his work, and will be asked to put life into it and make it move; being unable to do this, he will be sent to perdition.

The Moor above mentioned is so called in distinction from Arab because it has become the custom to apply the term Moor to the city merchant, or idle occupant of a bazaar, to the tailor, or the weaver, and the term Arab to the nomads of the plain, who dwell in tents.

Our Moorish friend of few words possessed the characteris-

tic features of the race: pale oval face, large dark eyes, aquiline nose, and rather effeminate appearance. Handsome and polite, too, he was; but as I did not wish to wear his affability threadbare on first acquaintance, and had become hardened to the curiosity of the ever-changing crowd, I transplanted my person and working apparatus to the very centre of the whirlpool, namely, under the archway six feet wide, the connecting link of the four thoroughfares; but I had made up my mind this time to "charge" the "frittery," and nothing short of an earthquake would have succeeded in dislodging me; for I had made previous attempts, but had abandoned my studies for serious reasons.

Everybody and everything passed through the arch like a fluffy skein of silk drawn through the eye of a darning-needle; let me be imagined in the eye of the needle, and some idea will be formed of how small I had to make myself. Fish-mongers with great baskets of sardines and huge slimy, slippery catfish trailing on the ground, left finger-marks and traces of fins on my side pockets. Young girls with boards on their heads, laden with dough ready for the oven, rushed along at full speed, but managed to steer clear of everything; donkeys, with big panniers filled with garbage from the street, were driven by a member of the ash-barrel fraternity, carrying a bell at his waist; other donkeys, laden with fresh roses for sale, offered a sweet contrast to their ambling brethren with bell accompaniment; blear-eyed Israelites, shouldering huge packages of muslin and calico, passed with doleful and nasal cry from house to house, and the haggling that went on through a crack in the door, and from the court and from the terrace, about a half-yard of cotton stuff, was often irritating to listen to.

The stream of passers-by was continuous until the lull at mid-day for luncheon and prayers at the mosques; then the

streets were almost deserted, and I could occasionally look at my canvas to see what I was doing; whereas during the hours of heavy traffic my eyes were wont to wander towards the boys who munched raw carrots and artichokes, in emulation of our own darling turnip and green-apple urchins of the North. My attention was drawn in other directions to sniffling and smooching babies on the backs of big sisters of six or eight years, bowed down under greasy rags and the weight of their burdens—both babies and nurses having their cheeks rouged, their chin, forehead, and wrists tattooed, and wilted flowers stuck into their hair and anklets, while soap and water were entirely neglected. These wretched little beings, though as troublesome as gnats on a summer's day, can be got rid of with a sou. But my more constant preoccupation was the imminent danger of being run over by blind people. These unfortunates know every stone and door in their street, and wander about the town, walking with the greatest confidence, and running into anybody with the utmost unconcern. "Balek!" (out of the way) I learned to scream quite like a native; but these wanderers did not always *balek* far enough out of my way, in which

JEWISH CALICO-VENDER, ALGIERS.

case I would entreat a spectator to scream for me, or I would wait until the approaching annihilator should receive a dig from the handle of my paint-brush; or, again, I would station the youngsters of the carrot and artichoke at different points as guards, and offer them a salary; but, alas! with all my precautions, my easel and canvas were toppled over as many as four times in one day, not to mention other pleasant reminiscences, such as having the colors transferred from my palette to the folds of a burnoose swishing by; and it sometimes happened that a wealthy native merchant was the victim, and had good cause for regret in the presence of Prussian-blue on his delicate rose-colored broadcloth.

But those mishaps were pure accidents, for there are few places where an artist is treated with as much or more courtesy by the higher classes, and is so little bothered by the common herd as here.

CHAPTER X.

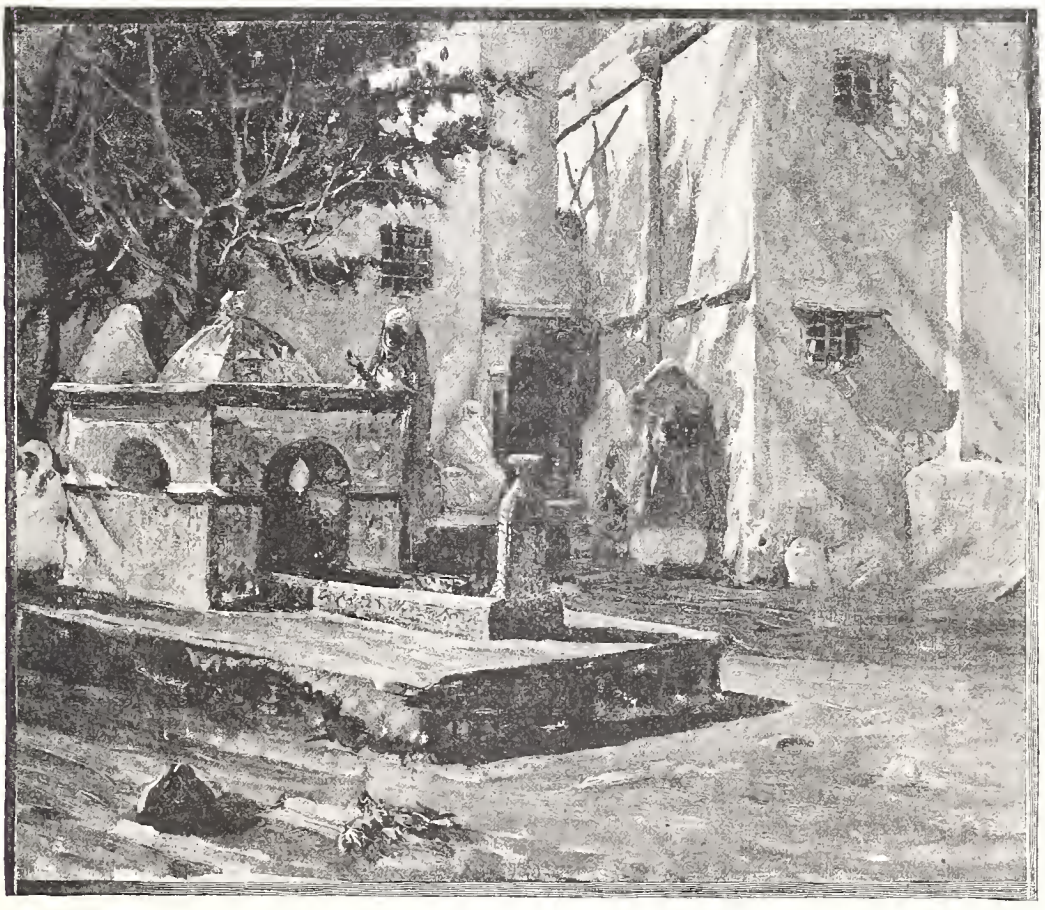
THE MOSQUES.

THE mosques, before the French occupation of Algiers, numbered over one hundred; there are now half a dozen, without mentioning obscure khoubas, and these have undergone so many "modern improvements" that they have lost a great deal of their original character.

The French Government has seen fit in some instances to replace magnificent tiles, ancient Moorish and Persian, by many square yards in succession of the commonest kind of blue and white modern tiles. A number of the old ones, however, still remain in the walls of the mosque of Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman, and attest its former richness. In many other instances the keepers of the different mosques have sold the tiles and replaced them by worthless modern ones; but the Government now forbids any further transactions of the kind.

The exquisite little mosque of Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman stands above a garden on the northern slope of the town overlooking the sea. The very small cemetery, with a few interesting marble tombstones, is a quiet retreat where women stroll about in the sunlight and lean against the parapet, looking at the blue Mediterranean, the shadows of the eucalyptus, mulberry, and fig trees playing on their glittering silken haïks. Here there once grew an enormous *caroubier* (a kind of locust-tree), whose thick foliage and out-stretched limbs covered the larger por-

tion of the cemetery. This old friend exists no longer, and the glaring white tombs have lost their protector, but they still have surrounding them a number of fig-trees. The caroubier grows to enormous size; its branches are exceedingly tortuous, and the leaves thick and oblong. We are told that the fruit—



IN THE CEMETERY OF SIDI ABD-EL-RHAMAN.

a sweet, long, brown pod like that of a bean—is the locust referred to in Scripture as being the food of St. John the Baptist in the wilderness.

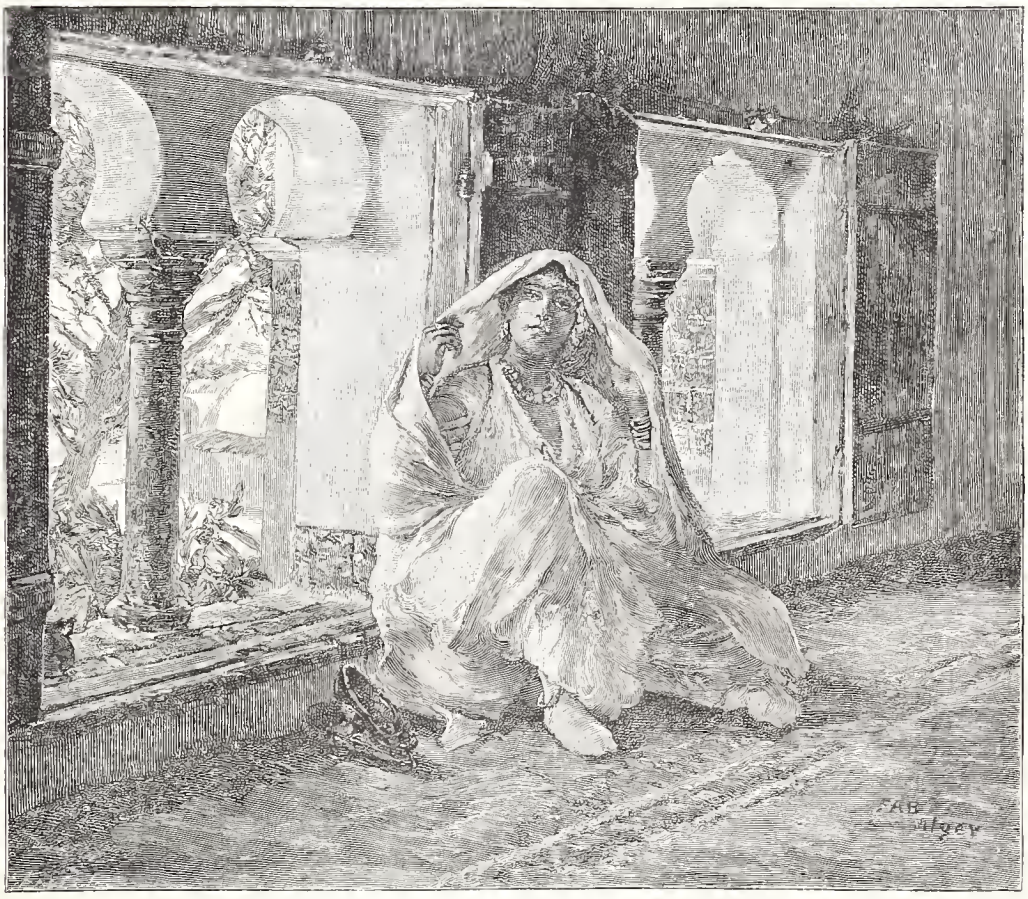
The marabout Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman is interred in an inner chapel by the side of his teacher and predecessor; the same

khouba stands over their graves and is profusely surrounded by flags and banners. The carved wood of the khouba, painted and gilded, is said to have been executed by a negro, a captive or slave. The flags are ornamented with inscriptions from the Koran sewed on in different colored silks. The Arabs are fond of telling strangers that this little chapel contains objects the total value of which is one million francs: lamps, ostrich eggs, pieces of embroidery, and stuffs of silk and gold, as well as a number of gimcracks, such as garden mirror-balls of various colors, all hanging from the ceiling. Over the *mirhab* (the small alcove which indicates the direction of Mecca, as the Moslem in prayer always turns his face towards the tomb of Mohammed) are hung several small pyramidal cakes of earth from the grave of the Prophet.

Abd-el-Rhaman and his companion in ashes have slept under the venerated soil for about six hundred years, and devotees continue to make pilgrimages to this shrine to invoke assistance in settling their disputes, in curing their diseases, and in obtaining wealth and happiness. Faith in old saints such as these may still remain, but of faith in the marabouts of to-day the same cannot be said, for the more intelligent Arab will confess that this has been shaken since they have allowed the French to take possession of his country and make laws to annoy him, putting restrictions on his ways of living, registering deaths, births, and marriages, prohibiting religious processions, and imposing taxes.

On certain days of the week the interior of the mosque, this delicious retreat from the outer world, is crowded with men and women. The whole assembly is a mass of white drapery and burnooses; of the women nothing is seen but their eyes, for they draw their haïks closely under the chin, carefully concealing their arms and hands.

There seems always to be room for one more, and the newcomer glides in and finds a squatting-place, with shoes in hand, the soles of which are put together in order that the profane dust of the street shall not desecrate the sacred precincts. The service consists in the reading of the Koran, and



WOMEN'S UPPER ROOM IN THE MOSQUE OF ABD-EL-RHAMAN.

those assembled repeat certain passages with the *thaleb* (the scholar), who is generally, in all mosques, a very old man.

At the tomb of the great marabout, women with their children and men come at all times of the day to pour out their grievances to the ever-sympathetic ear of the sidi. The women

especially have acquired a remarkable talent for dolorous intonations, and they seem to shed real tears in their out bursts of sorrow on entering the sacred chapel; but when they meet other female friends, their weeping gives place to lively gossip and chatting. A certain number of circuits round the tomb, with prayers, in a given number of successive days are equivalent to a pilgrimage to Mecca.

I was much annoyed at times when I was interrupted in making studies in this charming chapel by pilgrims who undertook a thorough house-cleaning with the garments which they wore. A swarthy devotee from Morocco began one morning by a thorough dusting of the tombs and shaking of the flags, then a sweeping of the carpets and matting, accompanying himself with an interminable recitation of verses from the Koran in a loud voice. Being persuaded that he intended that this pilgrimage should be a thorough equivalent for a trip to Mecca, I soon saw that there was nothing left for me to do but to get my freshly painted canvas out of his way, shut my color-box, and leave the field to him. He apparently did not know that there was any one else under that roof but himself and the marabout.

Nor was it without varied trials of this kind that I succeeded in finishing my study of the tomb; and this was, moreover, the very sketch which the Queen of Sheba happened to select for sticking wet against another canvas, thereby obliging me to recommence my experiences at the tomb.

The women showed a reasonable amount of curiosity in wishing to see studies upon which I was at work. When two or more were together they would sometimes enter into conversation after having timidly approached my easel, and on receiving encouragement they would even leave their veil turned up over the forehead, but only at times when they knew that

men of their race were well out of the way. They were too much afraid of the husband's *matraque* to run any risk of being beaten with it; for the men are good at single-stick, and possess formidable specimens made of hard-wood. They make use of them occasionally in their families. "Charity begins at home." Yet in other instances the women run from Europeans as if for their lives. The worthy and hard-working Kabyles, in whose memory the outrages of the French soldiers are deeply embedded, look with suspicion on foreigners; this race in particular, when in war among themselves or with near neighbors, almost invariably respected the women. The same cannot be said of the French when they conquered the Kabyles at first, and later quelled their insurrections.

A jug containing water from the sacred well at the entrance always stood on the window-sill in the chapel, and the Arabs almost invariably took a long draught after their prayers. The lovely little minaret covered with ancient tiles, many of which represent birds flying,* rises above the main entrance. An old cypress leans into the narrow passage leading to the entrance. Beggars throng the passages and steps. It is a sight worth seeing to witness the distribution of *kouskous* made to them on certain Fridays in December. The lame and blind of both sexes and of all ages have a general scramble for the basin containing the luxury, thrust what they can get into their mouths, scrape up the rest from the ground, dirt and all, and stow it away about their waists or in their

* The reader will bethink him here of the commandment against making images of living things; but the Moslem designer of tiles reconciles his artistic with his religious feelings by a curious device. He draws the birds full of flight and life, but traces a line round the neck. Their throats are cut, therefore they must be dead! Thus his conscience is saved.

greasy caps, and he who gets a piece of mutton or a bone is indeed lucky.

The two largest mosques, and those most frequented, are near the boulevards and overlook the harbor. The worshippers are of different sects—the *Hanefi* and *Maleki*—and they

MOSQUÉE DE LA PÊCHERIE AND KASBAH.

occasionally squabble and even fight; in fact, they have gone so far as to cause the French soldiers to intervene.

While painting in one of the mosques—Djamaa-el-Kébir—I often noticed a dark Othello, who seemed to want everything his own way in the court, where the fountain for ablu-

tions was deluging the marble pavement. He was evidently a fanatic of the most violent nature, and would abuse his fellows right and left if they kept on their shoes to walk across the court before entering the mosque, which surrounded the court on all sides. This was probably not sectarianism, but zeal.

Every visitor to the mosque is expected to take off his shoes out of deference to the feelings of the people, for the same reason that a man entering one of our churches with a cigar in his mouth and hat on his head would not only offend our feelings but would be shown to the door. The reader can therefore imagine the feelings of the Arabs, and can multiply them by ten of our own, when they see strangers walk over their sacred mats and carpets, and examine their mirhab and *mimbar* (the pulpit).

A French officer in top-boots once showed me a mosque, walking about as if the place belonged to him, and told me to keep on my shoes. As we came out, the offended Moslems looked at the officer with eyes that seemed to send out sparks of fire. Instead of sitting for hours without shoes on the cold, wet pavement, or even in the interior, when making studies, I adopted the plan of putting on socks outside of my shoes, which answered the same purpose. It does not make a neat-looking foot, but that is of minor importance, especially among the people with whom we are dealing.

The "Mosquée de la Pêcherie" gives the Oriental character to the large Place du Gouvernement, in the centre of which stands an equestrian statue in bronze of the Duke of Orleans, cast out of the cannon taken at the conquest of Algiers. It is not much to our purpose to give the names of statue and sculptor; the interest here lies in the contrast of a Moorish monument to a modern European statue—a con-

trast which marks distinctly the meeting of different nations so widely separated in art, ideas, religion, and customs.

A charming modern French writer, speaking of his impression of the Arabs, says, "It is interesting to see them sitting with bare heads in the sun, but it would be much more interesting if we could know what was going on in that head."

CHAPTER XI.

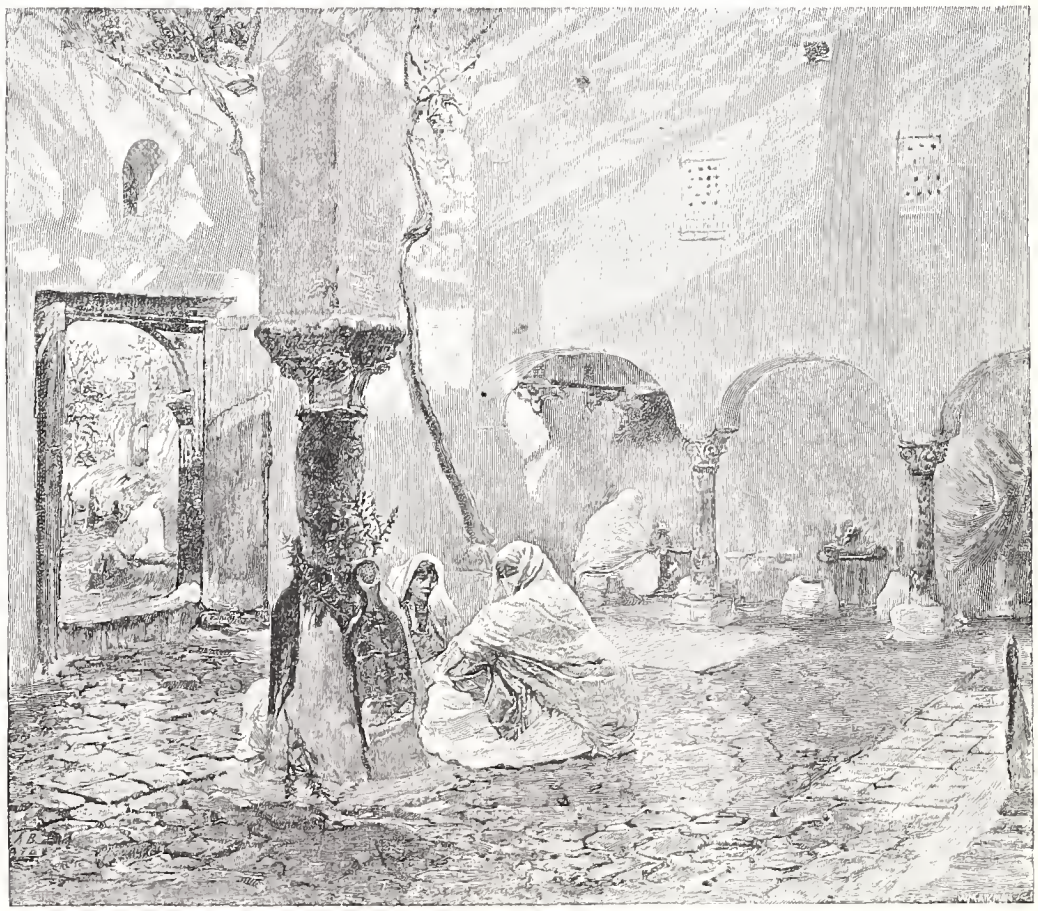
MOSLEM SHRINES AND LAW COURTS.

EVERYBODY is to be seen promenading in the charming Place du Gouvernement, with its belt of trees. It is a kind of neutral ground which every one respects, and one can be entertained for days by simply studying the different types—Jews both rich and poor; sheiks and thalebs, whose turbans and garments are kissed by the passing Arabs; dealers in gimcrack jewellery, daggers, cigar-cases, fans, costumes, blankets, carpets, brass articles, platters, etc.; an occasional woman from El-Aghouat, with a child on her back, generally on a begging tour; young bootblacks by the dozen, who will *cirer mossou* (equivalent to "shine 'em up, sir") for one sou. If monsieur refuses, the young and vivacious leech will black his own face and "shine it up," with the hope of obtaining a recompense; while other companions attract monsieur's attention by turning somersaults, hand-springs, walking across the boulevard on their hands, and similar accomplishments.

On two sides of the square, carriages stand day and night. The brisk little horses take one off sight-seeing or for a drive in the suburbs at a good round pace.

The Place is also the central starting-point of omnibuses and tram-ways, which are of the characteristic southern build—that is, not very substantial, painted in bright colors, and covered with dust. The jingling bells and cracking whips, under

a sparkling sun and the sharp-cut shadows of the plantain-trees, give wonderful animation to the scene. The omnibuses running to the Jardin d'Essai, St.-Eugène, Pointe Pescade, Belcour, Frais Vallon, and other environs bear amusing names in big letters, such as "Gazelle," "Berceau d'Amour," etc.



COURT OF THE KHOUBA AT BELCOUR.

Arab women patronize the conveyances, and on Fridays they go in crowds to Belcour, where there is a cemetery and a neat little khouba, frequented on that day by the fair sex only. A column in the centre of the court supports trellises of grape-vine. Tombstones of marble and slate are numerous in the

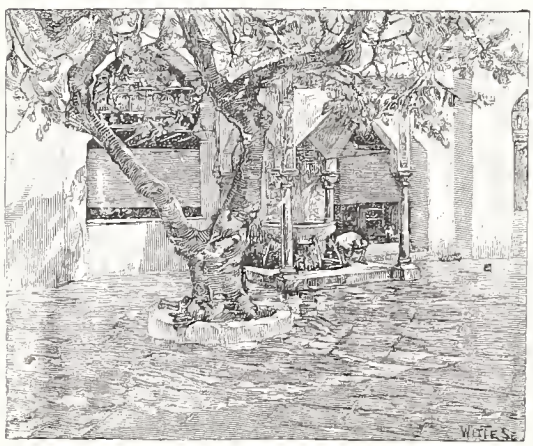
court as well as out in the cemetery. At the head of each tomb is a slab of marble with one or two round holes in which flower-pots are set, or cups, placed there that the birds may drink from them; the natives believe that these birds afterwards fly away towards heaven with a greeting from the soul reposing beneath; a charming sentiment.

The keeper of this khouba was old and blind, he passed his time in sweeping the carpets and matting, then resting and singing to himself. He would dust the sacred tomb with his handkerchief, which he afterwards washed and then dried in the sun. To satisfy my curiosity, I sent a child to translate for me and ask if he was happy, or what he could desire. He shook his head. "No, I want nothing; I am never *ennuyé*, and I am quite happy."

He knew his surroundings so well that he did scarcely any groping. He told me one day to move away, as the khouba was to be scrubbed and whitewashed. Oh, why was it that as soon as I commenced a study my subject required whitewash the next day? But I took advantage of the old man's infirmity and continued working until I was startled by the gruff voice of a neighbor, who asked me why I didn't "clear out" when I knew that the women, to whose drudging lot all such work falls, were waiting for me to go in order to begin their periodical cleaning. Resistance was not advisable; so I enjoyed in the delicious sunlight my "ticket of leave" from art. When I was left alone, a mischievous peep through the door which had shut me out assured me of the unattractiveness of the old females, and I wondered why they should not have considered it as much of a treat to look at *me*. The old ladies were not aware that several young faces had been unveiled, and had cast furtive glances over the parapet while I was at work.

I was soon rewarded for my expulsion by the sight of an

interesting ceremony—the funeral of a child. In a fresh grave the young boy was laid, wrapped in a yard or two of white cotton. A smaller hole had been dug at the bottom of the grave, and served as a coffin, being covered with flat slabs of stone to prevent the earth from falling directly on the body. Twenty or thirty men stood around in silence, the earth was hastily replaced, and temporary stones were set at the head and feet; the cushions and pieces of embroidery in which the body lay on the donkey that bore it to the final resting-place were put back on the animal, and the procession moved silently away. The women and girls always come afterwards to weep on the grave and place flowers, and especially branches of myrtle. They often spend the greater part of three days around a new grave, sitting on matting and carpets which they spread for their comfort, and perhaps to receive their friends and family respectably.



COURT AND FOUNTAIN OF DJEMAA EL-KÉBIR

Djamaa-el-Kébir (the great mosque), near the Mosquée de la Pêcherie, dates back to the eleventh century, but there is little to indicate the antiquity of the building. At the entrance is the court, where the cadi reigns supreme, settling family grievances and disputes, divorce cases, etc. I met there an old acquaintance, Mohammed, who was now a staid father of a family. Years ago he posed for me, and would spin out long legends and stories of personal troubles and real love affairs. His explanation of the planetary system was ingenious, but a little

behind the times. Our earth rests, according to him and his forefathers, on a bull's horn; the bull stands on another world, which reposes again on another bull's horn, and so on to the seventh bull; but when it comes to the question of where the seventh bull stands, we are not at liberty to inquire further into God's work, and must be content with what he has been pleased to reveal. The origin of the Arab's hatred to the Jews was a legend which he told with religious conviction. Mohammed the prophet owned a large park filled with gazelles; the favorite of these animals had horns and hoofs of pure gold, which attracted one day the eyes of a Jew. He gave chase, and running the gazelle down secured the precious metal.

My old friend Mohammed pretended to be waiting round the divorce court to get a settlement about some land in Kabylie; but as I met him three months after this time, and learned that he had lost his wife, I conjectured that he had been simply waiting his turn to obtain a hearing with the cadi, and to say, "I divorce this woman"—which makes matters easy in this country for a man who feels that he wants a change in his domestic realm. It is quite as easy for him to remarry the same woman; he can even repeat this farce three times (if the law is the same as in Egypt); but if he is thoroughly dissatisfied with his help-meet, and has made up his mind that she is a nuisance, he can say, "I divorce this woman thrice," and that's the end of it. Women's rights have not been heard of here, and the fair sex have nothing to say, except in the case of infidelity on the husband's part. My reader may be amused to learn that the proof in this case becomes next to impossible, for it must be the declaration of four eye-witnesses. Now, of all people the Arabs are perhaps the most suspicious of their fellows, and are consequently the last to be caught at any illegal flirtation.

In the cities the Arab knows what is going on at home, and has his eyes about him. In the country and desert he hides his tent as much as possible, and in a position which allows him to do all the spying, and will watch a stranger, native or foreign, who is hunting or travelling, until he is quite out of sight. The offended wife, then, who seeks a divorce on the above stated grounds has but little hope of success. Could it have been this very Mohammed's wife that I saw rushing about the outer court tearing her hair and clothes in anger, and giving vent to her feelings of injustice? One is apt to wonder whether Arabs have any nerves, those contemptible small fibres that trouble us so much. This certainly looked like nervousness, but the cadi's secretary succeeded in calming her, and the trial continued.

The trial is very simple, and the cadi is lawyer and judge; he listens to the case with considerable attention, it must be said, and gives his decision.

I have no authority for asserting that the Cadi of Algiers does not exercise his powers in a just and upright manner, but I give an extract from the observations of the French writer quoted before, on the way in which some of the cadis pass their judgments. The anecdotes are characteristic of the quarrelsome, suspicious, and vindictive nature of the Arab people:

"As for finding out the truth, as for rendering an equitable judgment, it is absolutely useless to think of such a thing. Each party brings a fabulous number of false witnesses, who swear on the ashes of their fathers and mothers, and testify under oath to the most barefaced lies. Here are examples: A cadi (the venality of these Mussulman magistrates is proverbial, and not to be surpassed) calls in an Arab and makes the following proposition: 'Thou wilt give me twenty-five *douros* (dollars), and wilt bring to me seven witnesses who will declare in writ-

ing before me that X—— owes thee sixty-five douros. I will make him give them to thee.' He brings the witnesses, who declare and sign. Then the cadi calls X——, and says to him, 'Thou wilt give me fifty douros, and will bring before me nine witnesses who will swear that B—— (the first Arab) owes thee one hundred and twenty-five douros. I will make him pay them to thee.' The second Arab brings his witnesses. Then the cadi calls the first before him, and, strong in the deposition of the seven witnesses, makes the second give him sixty-five douros. But in his turn the second protests, and, on the evidence of his nine witnesses, the cadi makes the first pay him one hundred and twenty-five douros. The share of the magistrate is thus seventy-five douros, levied on his two victims. The fact is authenticated. And yet Arabs will seldom appeal to the French justice of the peace because he is not to be bribed, whereas the cadi will do anything for money."*

* Guy de Maupassant, "Au Soleil."

CHAPTER XII.

A FESTIVAL.

IN December, to celebrate the birth of the Prophet, the flags and banners are taken from the tomb of Sidi Abd-el-Rhaman and carried to the cemetery of Ouëd-el-Kébir (the big river), near Blidah. Here they decorate for several days the tomb of another celebrated marabout, who has lain in a beautiful ravine under noble olives as quietly and as long as the sidi. At this season the sun shows himself over the mountain at nine and disappears at two o'clock. We went to Blidah, and the morning of the fête we took a conveyance and followed the gorge by the leaping brook for about two miles. A few miles beyond Blidah is a similar ravine, Les Gorges de la Chiffa, where, through the dense growth of bay, olive, fern, lentisk, and juniper, runs a brook, Le Ruisseau des Singes. The monkeys are frequently to be seen drinking, or, stretched on the limb of a tree, intently engaged in that fraternal aid and fellow-feeling which we have all observed in our zoological gardens.*

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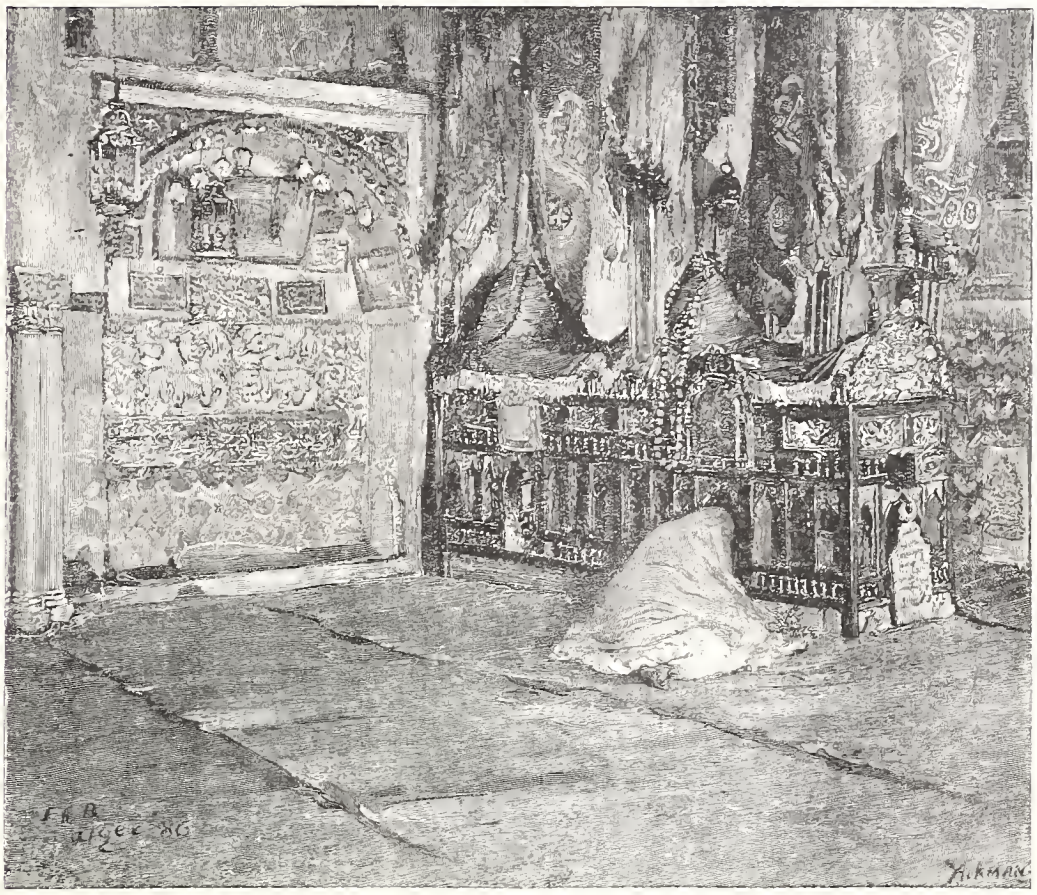
* "Their depredations," says Sir L. Playfair, in his highly interesting book, Hand-book of "Algeria and Tunis," "are sometimes very serious, and the natives use every means in their power, short of shooting them, to drive them away. They entertain a superstitious dread of killing these animals, as they believe them to be descendants of members of the human race, who, having incurred the Divine anger, were deprived of speech."



TOMB OF SIDI-ABD-EL-RHAMAN.

The road-side to Ouëd-el-Kébir was white with dust, and the Arabs were walking by hundreds, others riding on donkeys and packed in vehicles of all sorts. At the cemetery we found groups of women among the whitened tombstones, waiting as Orientals can wait, for the ceremonies and performances of the day and night. Blue smoke rose from the crackling fire of improvised cafés, where the beverage was being prepared by the gallon; tents were being made with large squares of matting stretched from olive boughs to the sturdy cactus, and the rising sun had just begun to gild in streaks the carpets and matting spread out for visitors.

A few of the well-to-do families were having tents made for them of haïks and the superfluous draperies of their wearing apparel. Towards mid-day the crowd had increased to two or three thousand. Several sheep and a bullock were killed in the midst of the spectators, who witnessed the complete operation of skinning and cutting up of the animals into pieces as large as the hand, all ready for immediate roasting over coals. The operation was perhaps clumsily performed, but in an incredibly short space of time.

The appearance of this slaughtering-place does not require description. A curious case of either fanaticism or weak nerve must be mentioned—that of a woman who was the object of interest for some moments. She lay in the surrounding accessaries of the butcheries, somewhat in the same position as the bullock. As the latter had been killed on the holy occasion of the Prophet's birthday, she esteemed it an honor, like others present, to be spattered with the blood of the sacrificed animal, but she was overcome with emotion and fainted. The Moslems seemed to regard the occurrence in a very matter-of-fact way, and allowed her to recover at leisure, but finally assisted her to stand, and I believe she retired into the hut of the keeper of the cemetery.

We had taken luncheon with us, being prepared to spend the day, and the members of our party congratulated themselves on not being obliged to depend on a fresh-meat luncheon and other camp-meeting delicacies. On a previous occasion we had been treated to panther sausages, which were offered, as my readers may presume, as a rarity and a delicacy. The latter quality we failed to appreciate. Although quite as agreeable to the taste as smoked or corned beef, they resembled boot-heels in texture. To satisfy one's appetite with them would have required the whole afternoon for mastication.

The *Aissaoui* assembled under a great olive, and formed a circle of about thirty musicians, most of whom played rhythmic and deafening music on large tambourines. There was a general call for a certain Mohammed, one of their regular half-witted dancers and fanatics. He appeared, bareheaded, and with the upper part of his body almost naked. Crouching with the musicians, he began nodding in time with the music, and then accompanied it with groans of "Allah! Allah!" He soon became half frantic, and jumped to the centre of the ring, his head swinging all the while. As he sank to the ground from exhaustion, his friends made several efforts to replace his dirty rags by a clean white gown, which they thought him justly entitled to, but it was all in vain; he fought against it, preferred his rags, and went away in them. An old man near us was also suddenly seized with such violent emotions that he fell, shaking and screaming to such an extent that his brethren, not wishing him, for some reason, to get up and dance, held him down with their knees on his chest and legs until the fury of his religious convictions had subsided. This emotion seemed genuine, and we were assured that it was, although other parts of their religious services, or rather feats, appear to be accompanied with jugglery and deception. The members of the sect of Aïssaoui claim that the great excitement of dancing and of their religious ecstasy unnerves their entire frame to such an extent that it renders them insensible to the stabs and burns which they inflict upon themselves. Several other members of their sect entered the circle, moved by some inspiration to dance off their frenzy, one of them crying out for a red-hot shovel, which he bent with a blow on his forehead, licked with his tongue, and bent again by slapping with the palm of his hand; he then turned his heel on it until his flesh burned like a horse's hoof being shod, giving out a

similar odor. This performance ended, another asked for a cactus-leaf and a piece of glass; these he bit into, devouring half the leaf with the long thorns, chewing and apparently swallowing the glass, and took his seat again in a swooning condition, moaning after his excitement. A third twirled a

NEGRO FÊTE AT BLIDAH.

large wooden ball, into which was fixed a long and sharp iron spike. Twisting his upper eyelid round the spike, and with the other hand pulling back the under lid, he exposed quite half of the eyeball, with which he stared at one in a demoniacal manner, yelling and foaming at the mouth all the while. The

sun was hot, and, like the Spanish bulls in the ring in summer, the Aissaoua warmed up more and more to his duty.

Still another exponent of the creed wildly cried out for a scorpion, which was given to him in a box. The courageous little creature, with his tail up ready to sting (but with the venom extracted?), was allowed to crawl over the face and arms of the believer, who teased him, and somewhat wearied the spectator, before performing the final act of chewing him up alive.

They do many other charming(?) tricks which delight the innocent looker-on—standing and lying on the edge of a sword, holding live coals in their mouth, singeing their faces and arms until they smell like chickens being prepared for dinner. Last, but not least, is the trick (if one can call it by that name) of devouring a rabbit alive, hair and all. This refined meal is partaken of by two Arabs, who frantically bite into the poor beast like wolves, tearing him apart with their teeth and hands, their mouths and fingers reeking with the hot blood of the rabbit, which is still trying to get away.

This horrid performance, however, was not carried out to the end; everything above mentioned was witnessed except devouring of the rabbit and their slashing themselves with knives, for the French Government prohibits the drawing of blood. These disgusting sights are still to be seen, however, at Biskra, where the sect retains more of its fervor. The Aissaoui can be seen in Algiers weekly.

What gave a local character to the whole scene, where the thousands were packed in amphitheatre around the howling Aissaoui, was the high-pitched "You-you-you-you-you!" uttered by the women at intervals as the animated actions below progressed in interest and intensity. The women were all sitting together, and as the evening approached they appeared not unlike the

spectres in "Robert le Diable." The cold blue-white tombs and gravestones now in deep shade, the hundreds of long tapers lighted in anticipation of the night procession, the glowing fires of the cafés under the long sweeping olive-boughs, formed an *ensemble* of color and mystery that seemed quite unreal. All the savage elements of the Mohammedan religion were there unchanged, and many of the devout believers would have asked nothing better than a pretext to annihilate the few Europeans present who were lost in the crowd of burnooses and haïks. A proof of this is an incident of which an acquaintance of mine, a photographer, was the hero. While taking instantaneous groups one morning, when the cemetery was crowded, he became the object of invectives from all sides, for he happened to be the only foreigner then present. He continued his work, trying to make them understand what it meant, but he was only answered by a shower of stones, while others rushed on him with sticks, with which they dealt him several blows, and his camera was broken. His life was only saved, in all probability, by a stalwart negro, over six feet in stature, whom he had employed to carry his apparatus, and who belabored some of the offenders unmercifully while the hated Christian made his escape.

They have a particular dislike to the camera, and have become acquainted with the noise of an instantaneous shutter, as the reader may infer from the above. A colonist who had lived in Algeria for forty years told me how he passed a good deal of his time among this people, how he had visited the sheiks in their houses and others in their tents, how he had been wild-boar hunting and partridge shooting with them, how hospitable they had been, inviting him to spend the night under their tents and partake of their food. But when it came to a question of making everlasting friends, he was told plainly that we

FÊTE AT OUËD-EL-KÉBIR.

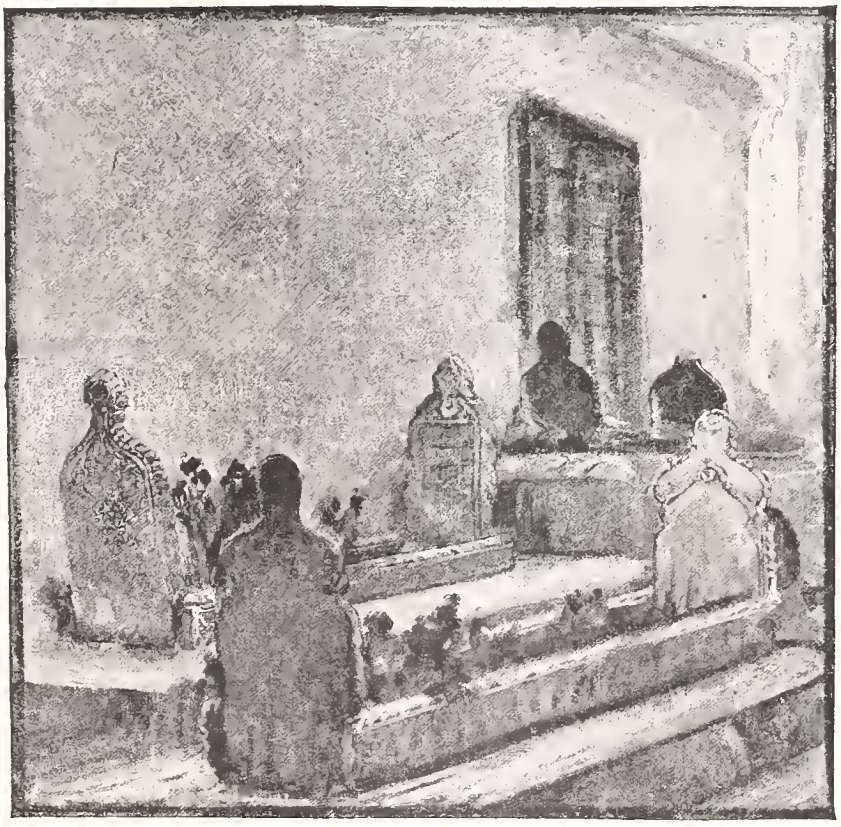
were admired by them for our industry, our inventions, our railways and steamers, our good institutions, but so long as we were Christians that was an insurmountable barrier to perfect fraternity. Upon one occasion he had passed through a village and went along a hot, dusty road, but was soon surprised and somewhat annoyed at being stopped by the son of the sheik, who came galloping after him in person to ask him to turn back and pay his father a visit. When he entered the tent, for it was in a *douar* (where the settlement is composed of tents), he found, besides the host, a dozen of the sheik's old friends, dignified in their bearing. After he had remained for half an hour, passing the time in salutations and conversation, in smoking and drinking coffee, he rose to take leave, but the aged sheik insisted upon his staying longer, for a feast was being prepared in his honor, and the kooskoos and sheep were already over the fire. The traveller, however, could not remain, as duty demanded his presence elsewhere. Seeing their guest could not be prevailed upon to "eat bread and salt with them," they allowed him to go, but requested that they might offer up a prayer to Allah for his health, happiness, and good voyage. All the old Arabs formed a circle round the guest, and with hands closed in front of them, the palms together, began to recite the *Fathah*—the first chapter of the Koran—accompanying their recitation by opening their hands, as one does a book. (Fathah signifies the "beginning or opening of the book.") The insurrections at different times prove their continuous dislike to the French domination; but the object of the Catholic institutions—of which there are several important ones in the country, where Arab children, orphans and outcasts, are taught the Christian religion, as well as our ways of farming and other accomplishments of advanced civilization—is to change eventually the religious views of the Algerines and make good citizens of them.

Assembled to overflowing at the little mosque at Ouëd-el-Kébir, inside and out under the portico were men praying continually, until eight o'clock in the evening, when all joined in the grand procession around the tomb of the marabout, which was covered with drapery on all sides.

Unfortunately at this hour the wind swept down the ravine, blew out most of the candles, and wrecked the chandeliers, made to hold several dozen tapers, and carried on a pole borne on the men's shoulders. The dust half blinded us, and so we were driven to the conclusion that the further proceedings would not compensate for our discomfort; the evening, moreover, was cold, and I found a good thick burnoose which had been lent me at Blidah, owing to the unexpected chilliness of the locality, of great use. Not only did it serve me in lieu of an overcoat, but as a means of disguise; for when the ladies of our party paid a visit to the old wife of the cemetery-keeper, into whose presence, as well as that of numerous unveiled female guests, men were naturally not admitted, the burnoose assumed the form of a voluminous haïk; but I discreetly remained in the court, near the door, befriended by the obscurity of the clouds passing over the moon, but in a position where I could see all that was going on. The little room was packed with richly dressed women, with a fresh supply of henna for their hands; rings, bracelets, gorgeous head kerchiefs, velvet jackets, embroidered belts, all worn in the correct style. A young girl wore long black silk gloves to the elbow, and her silver bracelets and rings outside; fixed in her hair were three diamond ornaments mounted on springs and set to imitate marguérites.

A very interesting young woman, known by the name of Maboula (the feminine gender of Maboul, which signifies crazy), sat in the midst of the visitors playing the derbouka and sing-

ing; her burnoose (for she had adopted this simple mantle) was thrown back, showing her head partially shaved like a man's, a thick long tuft of black hair being left on the crown. Her arms were thickly tattooed, and she bore the ordinary marks tattooed between the eyebrows, on the cheeks, and chin.



TOMBS AT SIDI-ABD-EL-RHAMAN.

We had already made her acquaintance in the cemetery, where she was sitting alone; she smiled and held out her hand to touch ours, then gracefully kissed the tips of her fingers, according to the pretty manner of greeting among this people. She possessed what might be called a sweet face, and was not veiled. She had been sitting in this quiet retreat all day long for years, and seemed perfectly happy. When the coffee was

being handed round in the assembly, and the charming Maboula was singing at her best, my haïk, which I was little accustomed to wear, fell and disclosed my hat and beard. Although the old wife chastised me (Maboula smiling and continuing her song), and there was a general movement of surprise among the inmates, I beat only a slow retreat, and to no great distance; but it was quite far enough to enable me to partially hide myself under a dark grape-vine and then to stumble over a young bull. This animal may have been docile, and may have taken me for a countryman of his on account of the burnoose, but my activity at the moment gave him little chance to decide on my nationality. After this incident we turned our backs on the cemetery, where we left hundreds of Arabs to spend the night in conversation, praying, singing, and descended the stony path till we came to the high-road, where we found a conveyance going to Blidah.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEGRO COMMUNITY.

WE spent several days in this town, and saw the cemetery of Ouëd-el-Kébir under different aspects, and our stay afforded us opportunities of seeing the fête celebrated in the private houses. The negro community always make a good deal of such occasions, and enter with characteristic gusto into the spirit of the entertainments. They are less suspicious than the Arabs; the women are not veiled, but one always recognizes the "darky"—vain, fond of finery, with their bump of self-esteem ever prominent.

On returning leisurely one afternoon from a stroll through delightful gardens and orange groves, for which the locality is famous, we were attracted by a noise "for all the world" like a threshing-machine; recognizing the deafening tam-tam in the hands of sturdy negroes, we soon found ourselves at the entrance of the place of festivities, and then, by cordial invitation, in the midst of them. It was a one-story house, with a picturesque court in which grew a few young trees and grape-vines on trellises. Over a roaring fire in one corner of the enclosure, kouskous, lentils, and mutton were boiling, and the spectators, of both sexes, sitting around on matting, were applauding the dancers in the small circle in their midst. A jolly old negress was making merriment by her grotesque poses and expressions, winking and blinking at the easily amused audience. A young

man, with a scarf round his chest, and wearing nothing else but loose pantaloons, performed some of the Aissaoua tricks (for negroes belong to this sect), holding coals of fire in his teeth and blowing them to keep them alive, singeing his arms and chin with burning wisps of grass, not forgetting to pass a tarboosh for collection of coin every now and then.

It is customary to elect a queen, who presides over all such gatherings, and holds the position until her death, when another is chosen—generally an old woman and the most respected in the community. She is gorgeously arrayed at fêtes such as these, and sits on a throne improvised out of cushions and draperies, on which is placed a large flat basket in front of her to receive gifts from the spectators, such as knives, mirrors, tassels, handkerchiefs, and anything which can be used by the dancers.

While we are enjoying the society of the negro element, let us accompany them to one of their most characteristic fêtes. *La fête des fèves* is held every year in the spring on the coast at Mustapha Inférieur, Algiers, where one of their favorite marabouts was buried. They assemble to sacrifice bullocks and sheep in his honor, and to heal or prevent disease and misfortune. These animals are butchered, with incense and incantations, in the most disgusting manner imaginable.

A hollow place, or little inlet from the sea, is selected in order to give the spectators an opportunity of witnessing the sacrifice. The animal has his throat cut with a big knife, and as the hot blood spirts, it is caught in rude earthen bowls and passed to those who wish to taste it. Then comes the gorgeous queen of the fête; this year she was an old negress, in silks and fine linen (or, more properly speaking, curtain muslin), in scarfs and kerchiefs and jewellery—a monument of finery, the sight of whom would have pleased a Semiramis.

This resplendent queen felt the importance of her position, and with pomposity she approached the kicking victim, a young bullock, thrust her hands and arms into his gurgling throat, and as a blessing dabbed the foreheads and cheeks of the by-standers who thronged round her, believing probably in the efficacy of her mediation with the ancient marabout.

After a good deal of smearing, right and left, of her own sex as well as the negro men, she withdrew, while the beast was expiring, supported, like Moses on the Mount, by her ace-of-spades companions. She was bespattered with gore from head to foot, and her hands were still unwashed, although she had rolled them in the sand, which stuck to her rings and bracelets; but her devout subjects kissed them and her garments, and conducted her to one of the tents, where cooking was in progress and coffee was continually being offered.

Above the sandy beach the rising ground was green with long grass, now all trampled down; tents, made of old draperies and matting on poles, were pitched here and there; and the glimpses that we had of the women and children, dark against the sunlit draperies, were most picturesque. Little niggers with porcelain teeth and eyes peeped from under the tents, and others ran about in the crowd. Some of the negresses were surprising in character and make-up. A very thin woman, as black as it is possible for skin to be, looked like a mummy recently discovered and brought to life by some modern appliances of electricity. Yet she was young, and even pretty — a type to be seen and wondered at, but not to be imagined. We were enveloped in a cloud of coal-dust at one spot, where residue had been thrown from the locomotive houses near by. Why the young negro men chose these cinders to dance on was surprising, when they had grass or sand all around them. The dancers, exceedingly graceful and animated to an immense

degree, held in both hands large castanets, or clappers, made of iron, and calculated to make a noise scarcely inferior to that of an express train running over a succession of switches. With an accompaniment of a dozen drums, and of songs in short phrases and ejaculations by the performing company, they made

LA FÊTE DES FÈVES.

themselves heard, as the reader may imagine, at a great distance. What can the racket be when a fête in the middle of Algiers takes place in an open court with resounding echoes? With some difficulty I gained admission to a very large house in the town known as Dar-Sedjor (the house with the tree), where similar fêtes are held, and where I made a study. There must have been at least a dozen different families under the

same roof. I knew, to my annoyance, that half a dozen strapping negroes made their appearance during the day, and each one said, in a different way, "I'd like to know who told you that you might plant your easel in my house?" I had previously made a bargain for a certain length of time at so much, and my sullen landlord would have threatened to evict me had I not begun to move as my last hour was striking. In the circle of dancers and drummers — which we have left for a moment—the "nigs" were having a grand time of it, and were all amiable, although they were much opposed to being sketched, and several photographers were made to stop operations.

When the old queen and attendants had flounced around long enough with their blood-stains, they moved off down to the sea to have a general wash. They sometimes throw themselves into the water just as they are, in all their gorgeousness. On the other side of Algiers from the locality of this fête, on the north coast near St.-Eugène, other sacrificial rites take place every Wednesday morning at sunrise, and are popular with certain of the lower classes of Arabs. Lambs and fowls are slaughtered, and the natives smear themselves with their blood, in which they suppose similar efficacy lies to that ascribed to the bullock's blood and the sacred waters of Sidi-Abd-el-Rhaman already alluded to. When the bled chicken flutters into the sea it is considered a good omen.

The first washing of a child is the occasion of rejoicing: it takes place seven days after birth. The usual gathering of musicians and guests fills the court in which the baptism takes place. A haïk or other piece of drapery is held at the four corners by some of the women present over a basin or fountain where the little one is to be bathed. After a good scrubbing and the natural consequence of the same, kicking and screaming, the youngster is dressed in ample pantaloons, jacket, shoes,

and a cap tied on his head; his hands are then bandaged up in a mush of henna, which looks like spinach cooked. This little hand-organ monkey now belongs to the community, and has a name. He is regarded as being old enough to resist the evil-eye, which might have done him harm had he been washed at a more tender age. [In Egypt parents are not particular about having their progeny washed or cared for during the first seven years of their existence, on account of their fear of the evil-eye.]

The mother can witness the proceedings from her bed, or she may take a seat in the court. The feast is not neglected, and visitors are expected to partake largely of the different and abundant dishes. Only women and children are present. First comes soup made up of mutton gravy, lentils, onions, etc., in which each person dips with his or her own spoon, retaining it for the whole repast. Kouskous is of course the substantial dish, and is always made by the women; wheaten dough is passed through a sieve, and the pellets are rolled by hand the size of small shot. When prepared for a wedding, the women begin several days in advance, and instead of making the pellets round, they are rolled with much care into a long shape, the size of barley grains. Boiled mutton, or sometimes chicken with hot gravy, is poured over the kouskous when cooked. A large deep metal pan of sour milk is passed by each guest after she has taken a draught. Salad, lentils, beans, and such dishes follow, accompanied by a vessel containing orange-flower water sweetened, into which the feaster dips a greasy fritter—the combination is really excellent—and, to finish, for one cannot keep on forever, notwithstanding the Arab hospitality, dessert is served. I have tasted at various festivities exquisite delicacies unlike anything we are accustomed to eat—cakes and candies made of honey, pea-nuts, pine-cone pods, cocoanuts,

and a number of other delicately flavored concoctions; but my experience of some years ago was, I fear, exceptional, owing to the fact that on that occasion, after a long excursion in the desert beyond Biskra, we came to a miserable village, where we were most hospitably entertained by the sheik, or governor, of the locality, and naturally everything offered us had the charm of novelty, besides the surprise of getting anything like a decent repast. It is hardly necessary to mention coffee, as it is omnipresent in the Arab dwelling, but all of my readers may not know how it is made. The bean, after being burned, is pounded, not ground, in a mortar, the powder is mixed in a thick paste (a good quantity of ambergris being added), a small spoonful of which is put into the little coffee-pot containing hot water; sugar is put in at the same time, and the whole is allowed to boil up three different times before serving. This one sees at any café in the town. Some of us (not including the writer) cannot accustom ourselves to the muddiness of the beverage, others prefer it to clear coffee. When well made all the aroma is there, and the dregs settle in a short time. One point in its favor is that it is served boiling hot, whereas in the majority of French cafés it is only warm. * * *

The invasion of locusts is the terror of the colonist and of the native cultivator, but the inhabitants of the desert do not regard them with the same dread. In Algeria (as well as in Arabia, according to Palgrave) the Arabs kill and collect as many of them as possible for food. They eat them dried and salted, or else fried.

This plague of locusts—for in the first years of the French conquest it could well be considered as such—takes place still, but by numerous inventions the fearful consequences have been very much diminished. The invasion takes place every few years at the end of the hot months, of which September is the

most unbearable, as little or no rain falls after June until October, and the parching sirocco, disagreeable enough from its irritating effect in winter, is very trying in summer. According to Sir L. Playfair, "First, dark clouds of adult insects, which darken the sun, and appear like a thick fall of snow, come from the direction of the desert. These soon commence to lay

ON THE TERRACES.

their eggs in any light sandy soil they can find, and in thirty or thirty-five days afterwards the young insects, or *criquets*, commence to appear. These are far more destructive than the parents, and under their attacks vegetation of every kind disappears as by magic. They usually appear towards the close of the hot season, and the first rain or cold of autumn causes them all to disappear."

There was an invasion in 1883 or 1884, when something like four thousand cubic feet of the eggs alone were destroyed. The locusts and criquets were made to move in the direction of long ditches dug for the purpose, and when millions had tumbled in, burying each other, they shared the same grave, with a good load of earth to keep them down.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO LA TRAPPE.

THE famous Catholic religious order of monks called Trappists are established about ten miles from Algiers, near the village of Staouelli. The monastery is known as La Trappe de Staouelli. Candidates are allowed to enter the monastery at the age of sixteen or eighteen, and are at liberty to leave within three years if they find that they cannot abide by the rules and conditions stipulated; one of which is that they must never speak. (My fair readers will not, I hope, think that I am the only authority for the assertion that a similar institution exists where the inmates are all women.)

La Trappe is visited on Sunday and fête days by a great many excursionists, who ride or walk, and put up with a great deal of inconvenience (especially the pedestrians, who are all one color when they arrive on a hot dusty day) for the principal satisfaction of getting a very good luncheon at noon for the modest sum of one franc; and I am sorry to say that some of the sly and impecunious visitors get their feast for nothing.

All visitors are looked upon, according to the traditional method, as travellers, and the hospitable monks furnish food to the wayfarer gratuitously, but in all monasteries there is a box to which the guests contribute what they please. At La Trappe one franc is customary; and it is probable, as above

stated, that some of the near-sighted recipients of hospitality are unable to find the box.

The day that we drove up in a small party to the door of the monastery, we found that not less than sixty famished travellers like ourselves were washing down the dust from their irritated throats, and we had nothing to do but to wait, as we had arrived a little late for the regular luncheon-hour. A most courteous old monk of seventy summers, as the poets put it, received us and gave us information concerning the institution. As he did the talking for the entire fraternity, numbering about one hundred, the reader may understand that his tongue did good service and hadn't time to grow rusty. When he was young, and before he became spokesman, he did not find it very difficult to give up conversation, but to one rule he could never, even to this day, accustom himself — that was, rising at two o'clock in the morning; it was barbarous. Retiring with the chickens, at seven in the evening, the monks had a fair period of repose, but the hours for sleep were badly chosen for comfort. Living, however, as they did designedly, in a way contrary to everything like ease and luxury, they were obliged to submit to the regulation.

When we had finished our breakfast, which consisted of three dishes of vegetables, bread, cheese, fruit, and excellent wine, both white and red, we left in the vestibule the ladies of our party, who were not permitted to accompany us, while we followed the same old man of seventy summers into the monastery. We were particularly requested not to speak. Our guide told us before entering the different halls for what purpose they were used. The chapel was large and cool, and of course very plain. Each dumb worshipper had his stall. On the walls were numerous inscriptions reminding one of the miseries of this life, among them this inspiriting device: "S'il est triste de

vivre à la Trappe, qu'il est doux d'y mourir;" and it may be remarked that, compared to the lugubrious severity of the interior, the sight of the cemetery a short distance off in the grounds filled one's soul with mirth. And again: "Il vaut bien la peine de vivre sans plaisir pour avoir le plaisir de mourir sans peine"—an epigrammatic phrase which is untranslatable. Some of the long halls were used for morning prayers and evening prayers and two-o'clock-in-the-morning prayers. The plain benches and floor were highly polished by constant devotion.

The dining-hall was especially funereal; the long narrow tables and benches were painted black; a metal plate, a salt-cellar, wooden spoon and fork, napkin in ring, were laid for use of the frère Raphael, or père Dominique, or novice Jérémie, whose name was painted in conspicuous letters on a board which lay by each set of utensils. Prayers and exhortations are made during dinner, and benedictions pronounced from a central pulpit by one of the brotherhood.

In one of the arid courts not yet converted into a garden or shady walk, convicts from Algiers were being drilled in the hot sun until they seemed thoroughly sick of it, then they were marched into chapel. At other times they are made to work in the fields under overseers, who prevent them from speaking and from escaping. A watch is likewise kept on the monks while at work in the vineyards for the better keeping of the rule. By their praiseworthy industry they have converted a desert—the large tract of land which belongs to them—into fertile and productive soil, and they cultivate fruit, grain, grapes, and vegetables. Their wines are delicious, especially the white, but very alcoholic. The cellars extend under a greater part of the large buildings of masonry, and contain hundreds of hogsheads and barrels, and the largest of the hogs-

heads contain thousands of gallons of wine each. In size they measure about twelve feet in diameter and in depth.

In order to guard against the introduction of phyloxera into the vineyards, the Custom-house is very severe with passengers who attempt to land with any fruit. One frequently sees strangers devouring a whole basketful of their precious apples and pears, rather than allow them to be crushed under the ruthless heel of an officer.

Everything is produced at La Trappe; cattle and horses, poultry and rabbits, raised. In the distillery several wagon-loads of geranium leaves had been emptied, but as it was Sunday the fires were not burning, and the immense caldrons were cold. A thick perfume-essence is made from the geranium leaves, and sold for sixty francs the quart bottle.

We must not quit the premises without taking a look into the dormitory. After passing through the library and examining a few books, most of which, or perhaps all, related to religious topics, we came to a long hall (always a "long hall"), where each cot-bed occupied a stall seven feet by four, open at the top, for the partition only rose to a height of seven feet, and the hall was high and airy. At the entrance of each chamber hung a scant curtain, which gave the appearance of sleeping apartments of bathing-houses on a beach to the whole row. A hard pillow, one gray blanket, a crucifix, and a small hand-broom were the monks' only furniture. As to bowl and pitcher, I believe I am right in asserting their absence.

Continuing our drive from La Trappe, we returned by the sea, passing through several villages. A fête was in full swing at Pointe Pescade for the benefit of French shopkeepers and lower classes, and as the merry-go-rounds and "Aunt Sallies" were of European invention, we only stopped long enough for refreshments. Everything was so out of keeping with the

customs of the country and the surroundings, that it jarred on the senses. The Arabs seldom appreciate clownish actions, and the few present looked on gravely at the dancing and gestures of the half-intoxicated participators. We recognized many of the guests who had preceded us at the Trappe, and who tried to make themselves believe that they were having a glorious day of it by walking twenty-five miles, returning to Algiers by the longer route, besides stopping to dance in the middle of the road, in dust ankle deep.

Steamers, black with people and bedecked with flags, took people to and from the fête.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE BATHS.

NO traveller in the East can consider his sojourn complete without the experience, at least, if not luxury, of a Turkish or Moorish bath. If you go, you go to perspire, and to see everybody and everything around you perspire. After undressing, and depositing your watch and valuables with the proprietor, go to the hot room and stretch yourself upon a raised platform in the centre of the tepidarium—built of large slabs of marble over an oven in which a raging fire is eager to roast you. Think of the dolmens of old upon whose back the Druids offered their sacrifices, and imagine yourself any animal you please. When you are roasted on one side, turn over and try another corner of your altar to find a cool spot; then lie on the stone floor and let your grinning attendant crack your bones, pull your joints, and twist your neck, and knead you with his hands, and walk over you with his knees; then let him roll off your old skin, and with evident pride lay before you long strings of your worthless hide, a dozen of them in a row; then you begin to realize that you have had one bath in your lifetime that has been of some genuine use to your human existence. Pumice-stone for the soles of your feet and strong soap and wisps of hemp, or similar fibre, help to take off your second skin, but you keep on your third to go home with by fixing it with a

bucket or two of cold water. Then, to keep what remains of you together, and to prevent your third skin from trying to get away, your attendant wraps you tightly in towels as big as sheets, and your head in a turban, and perches you on high wooden sandals to keep your feet out of the water, for the pavement is also perspiring freely; small rivers flow in every direction. In this becoming garb, like a man buried by mistake in the catacombs, you come forth and lie down with the other mistaken corpses, and help them drink tea and perspire once more, and throw another mantle of smoke about you with a long pipe. Then you are fit for nothing; lie still, and let the world wag as it will. . . . The hours set apart for men at the baths are from seven o'clock in the evening until noon, thus furnishing them with good sleeping quarters for the night. On my first visit to Algiers with a friend, in 1872 all the hotels happened to be crowded, and as we arrived at eleven o'clock we could not well remain until morning under the stars; we therefore followed an acquaintance accustomed to the manners of

INTERIOR OF MOORISH BATH.

the country, and in the same predicament, to a bath; but on opening the door of the large room, where perhaps fifty Arabs were snoring on their mattresses and on matting, our noses were greeted with such an unwelcome odor of animal life under high pressure that we decided at once to try our luck elsewhere, and finally found apartments in the town.

NEGRESS ATTENDANT GOING TO THE BATH.

The baths are the great places of rendezvous for the Arab women, who spend an afternoon there frequently (their hours being from noon till seven), and they certainly deserve this much of social intercourse. They are seen with their children in the streets going to the bath, accompanied by a gorgeous negress carrying a bronze vessel filled with necessary articles, and other baskets and bundles, containing a complete change of linen; also several strings of orange-blossoms. Orange-flower water is not to be forgotten, for it enters extensively into their luxuries as a drink with

their meals and as a perfume. For the latter purpose a bottle of brass, silver, or gold, with long neck and a pepper-box termination, is used, with which they sprinkle guests at home and friends at the bath, as well as themselves. The baths, again, "take in washing," especially of heavy woollen burnooses, haïks, blankets, etc., which the attendants and the *moutcho* (a young boy-servant, whose name is evidently of Spanish origin) wash with their feet and plenty of soap and water on the marble pavement in the hot room. These articles are hung, with the bath towels and other linen, to dry on the terraces. To make a study under the drippings of such an entire laundry may be looked upon as a feat, aside from the fact that the moutcho seemed afraid to leave me within reach of such valuable wet linen. When the yellow burnooses are to be bleached, they are arranged, like tents, over the smoke of sulphur fumigations. This operation is equal to a thousand matches burning unwelcome incense under the artist's nose. The bath attendants are apparently wonderfully constituted to avoid rheumatism and pneumonia; they go in and out of the heated room for hours together with only a towel round their loins, but they do catch cold all the same.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TRIP TO TLEMÇEN.

FROM Algiers to Oran is a good day's journey by railway, hot and tedious. In the hottest months of summer the trains run at night; for the terrible Vallée du Chélif, through which the route lies for a great part of the distance, is almost unbearable during the day. Covered with waving wheat, grass, and flowers in spring, it becomes a barren and parched waste in summer. The sun, monarch of all he surveys, extinguishes here all life, animal and vegetable. The heat is as intense (122° in the shade) as it is on the border of the Sahara, a hundred miles farther south.

The Arabs make use of the train; they manage, after much time and deliberation, to buy a ticket, and are shown into the compartment, generally third class, which they are to occupy. They are not accustomed to chairs; so that when there is room they crouch on the benches, slip off their shoes, and hold their toes—a favorite way among them of deriving comfort. Fatigued, solemn, and sunburnt faces, with eyebrows which have assumed a perpetual scowl from the habit of shading their bloodshot eyes, fill the windows, while crowds of others hovering about the stations look wistfully at you from under not only the folds of a turban but immense straw hats, with twelve inches of brim and as much of crown, ornamented in various designs with bands and lozenges of

leather, cloth, and tassels of different colors. Miserable inhabitants of the neighboring *douars* (villages of tents), clothed in the only burnoose which they perhaps have ever possessed since arriving at the age of manhood—a garment which is torn, patched, darned until its original stuff has disappeared—timidly offer for sale dates, oranges, medlars, ground-peas, figs, the meagre production of their own little corner of ground. Notwithstanding their dirt and rags, are they not always more picturesque and interesting than the corresponding loafers among us, out at elbows and knees, to say nothing of their proclivity for drink, which is almost unheard of among the Mohammedans?

As long as the burnoose hangs together it is as classical in its long folds as the toga. No matter how much soiled or worn, there is always an infinite variety in its drapery. Compare with this beautiful old age the early and fatal decrepitude of a pair of modern pantaloons, for instance! And how is it that we have lost the secret of dignity in dress and learned that of shabbiness?

The European sight-seer and bombastic commercial traveller, the old acquaintance and familiars of all the hotel-keepers of the towns and of the pretty waitresses in the railway restaurants, enjoy excellent meals at stopping-places on the way, even in localities of most dismal appearance, in whose soil one can imagine nothing to flourish except scorpions and lizards. Prominent also, of course, are the tolerably intelligent and the common colonist, the latter almost an Arab as regards intellect and brutality. He kicks and cuffs the *cochon d'indigène*, as he invariably calls him, cheats him, and if the native responds in the same manner to the colonist's abuses he must suffer in consequence, as if he was the only offender. The ingenious colonist invents, for instance, a barrel with a double bottom of sev-

eral inches, which he uses to his advantage in buying olive-oil—the oil slowly disappearing makes room for several more quarts than its legitimate capacity. The native, when he discovers his foreign brother's tricks, is not too much of a fool to invent tricks of his own; and, such grosser tricks apart, the foreign house-keeper, in dealing with the town Arabs, is much puzzled in trying to ascertain the real cost of various articles of food for her table. If her servants are foreigners who accompany her to Algiers, they are made to pay foreigners' prices; if she would economize by hiring Algerine servants, they may obtain the articles at Arab prices, but they in their turn pocket the difference, so that the mistress still pays the prices in accordance with her nationality.

The Vallée du Chélif is watered by a system of *barrage;* a dike built of stone, over sixteen hundred feet long, one hundred and thirty feet high and as many feet broad, keeps in check something like four hundred million cubic feet of water supplied by the rivers. When the wall gave way to the pressure of the water some years ago, an immense tract of country was devastated, villages were washed away, and hundreds of their inhabitants drowned.

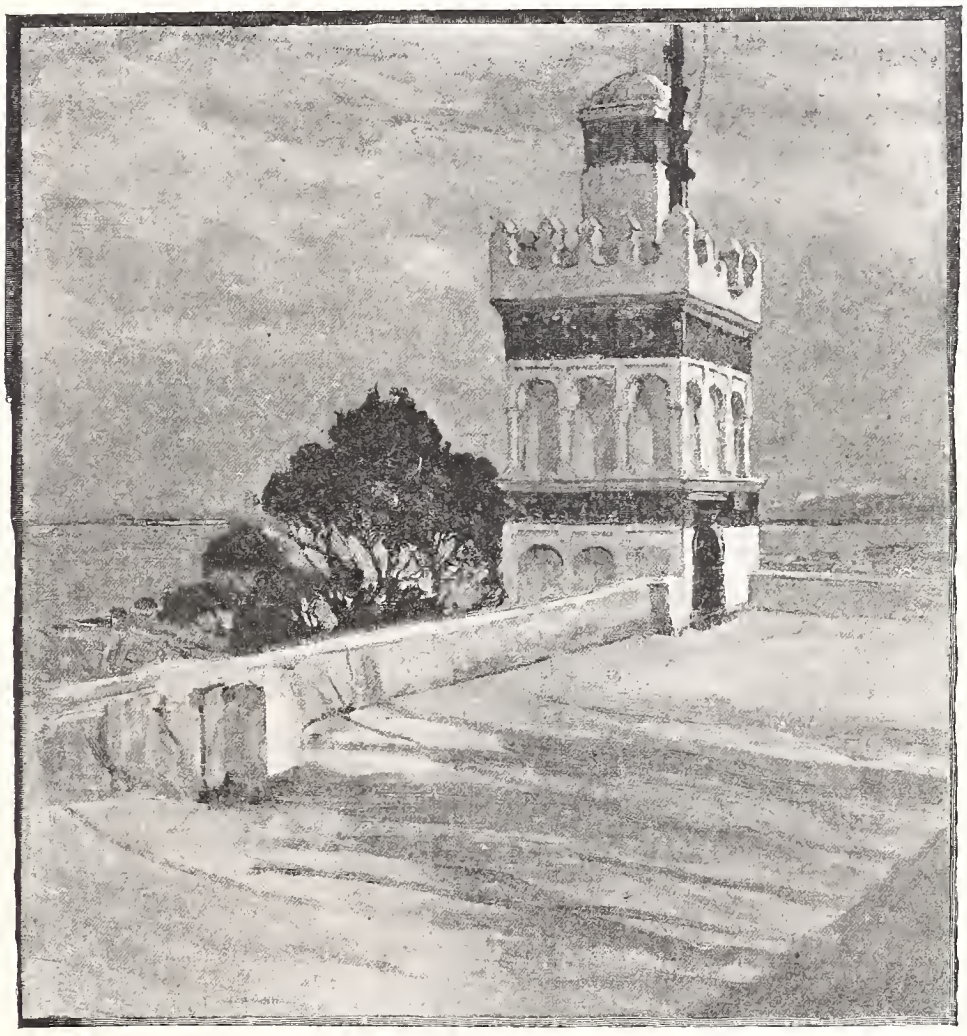
The traveller scarcely ever loses sight of the tomb of a marabout; if one of these is not seen shining like a great roc's egg against the yellow hill-side or the distant blue mountains, another can be discovered on some lonely peak in the far distance, cut out against the sky. The dome is generally like the pointed end of an egg, surrounded by four little turrets, one at each corner of the square structure. The marabout is buried in the vicinity of his abode, and his tomb is kept in order by subscriptions and donations from pilgrims. On the road-side the traveller often sees thorny bushes one mass of bits of rags of all colors; these are pieces of clothing of passing Arabs,

which they tear off and leave in this manner, as a token of their devotion to the memory of the marabout near whose sacred precincts they are travelling. At first sight these bushes seem to have caught hold of a migrating ragman's stock in trade.

In parts the hills are covered with dwarf palms from two to four feet high. An occasional sturdy and thickly leaved oak, isolated from all other verdure, and perhaps miles away from other trees, becomes the magnet for a family of nomads, who pitch their dark-brown camels'-hair tents near it—seldom round it; why, I do not know—and round their little douar they make an impenetrable hedge of thorny bushes of an ashy gray, tightly packed together. The only refuge for the horses, donkeys, sheep, and goats of the douar from the torrid sun is furnished by the oak. Little filmy clouds of dust rapidly succeeding each other attract your attention. A donkey trips along, its hind-legs weak and knocking together from having been worked when too young; upon it sits a woman with a child either in her lap or clutching on behind, with dusty little legs spread over bags and baskets. The tawny father walks near or leads the way, carrying a long gun across his shoulders, and rudely fashioned knives in leather scabbards dangle within easy reach at his girdle. Perhaps less classical, less clean, and certainly less conventional than a picture, yet it is a presentiment of the "Flight into Egypt."

From Oran, less interesting in every respect than Algiers —at any rate, to the artist and general public—we go on by train, after a night's rest, to Ain-Temouchent. This terminus is without interest. One principal street with low modern colonists' houses and shops is, however, an important point on the road to Tlemçen. The diligence, incrusted with dust, is having a third story added to it in the shape of trunks, boxes,

hampers, a bundle of swords, boots, blankets, belonging to two young soldiers returning from a short furlough. They have red noses and cheeks in the process of peeling, and sunburnt foreheads bearing a sort of high-water mark against the white



ON THE ROOF OF SIDI-ABD-EL-RHAMAN, ALGIERS.

skin protected from the sun by the cap. Behind the driver's seat is the *banquette*—room for four, and perhaps the most agreeable places; behind this bench, and under the tarpaulin with which the third story is covered, a few Arabs pack in;

the heat is stifling, but they have patience, or perhaps console themselves, as they do in every other circumstance, by saying "it is written" that they shall suffer in this way. The *intérieur*, seating eight or ten persons, is perhaps worse; the dust curls in eddies, and is carried along in the inside, where no current of air disturbs it. I had retained seat number two, unfortunately in the middle of the coupé, which is the separate compartment looking forward, and not only under the driver's seat, which projects and hides the view of the sky before us, but behind baskets of eggs, bundles of artichokes, and bags of hay and oats, which he collects at the different villages, and stuffs under his seat until delivered at other stations on our route.

Seven well-kept bays were harnessed and put in the traces while we finished our coffee and cigarette after a fair breakfast, and we started off at a brisk pace, on the minute and to the sound of a cracking whip. My two travelling companions proved to be two well-to-do inhabitants of Tlemçen; rather uncommunicative at first, they became more congenial, but as they knew very little French our conversation was limited. The medium of an introduction was soon found in a basket of *nèfles du Japon*—bright yellow, and acid enough to be very refreshing—which I had bought at Ain-Temouchent, in anticipation of a hot and dusty ride of eight hours.

With a little imagination I could see in the companion on my left a perfect type of a prince of the house of Tlemçen, of a few centuries back, returning from Granada by Oran to his palace twenty-five hundred feet above the sea. Clean-cut features, deep-set black eyes, like beads, and the nose slightly aquiline; one could almost see the impress of his father's thumb and fingers where the parental squeeze had given the nose its downward turn; for an Arab, aside from the characteristics of his race, can never possess, owing to this process

when he enters the world, a turn-up nose. The poor little girls, however, seem sometimes to have escaped this attention on the part of the parents, for the advent of a girl is considered a misfortune in a family, and everything that goes wrong is attributed to the bad star which protects her.

The Prince wore his black mustache cut off square above the lip, and his beard neatly shaven about the throat, leaving a narrow strip from ear to ear, coming to a point at the chin. At our first stopping-place for relaying he insisted upon my drinking with him. He adhered to his religion by partaking of nothing stronger than orgeat. We never lost sight of the distant mountain where Tlemçen lies, and I longed to see something more interesting than the rolling country covered with dwarf palms and rocks, presenting at every turn a remarkable similarity which became monotonous. We passed shepherds driving several hundred sheep together, and we went through them like a boat going through water. An occasional douar of a few miserable tents could be seen in the neighborhood of a brook, where the women went stealthily to get water, half hiding their faces and ready to run when they found themselves too near the diligence. Half a dozen lank camels browsing in the little valleys raised their long necks to gaze mournfully at our compact caravan, moving slowly up the hill in a cloud of dust, the horses' bells jingling lazily, while the travellers were dozing, weary, hot, and dusty. Our fourth and last relay was made at the foot of the mountain, and within sight of our destination, which we reached at a furious gallop, on as good a road as that of the Champs Elysées.

While we were still without the fortifications, portals, and walls of the ancient capital, three handsome and well-dressed youths, eight, twelve, and sixteen years of age, came dancing

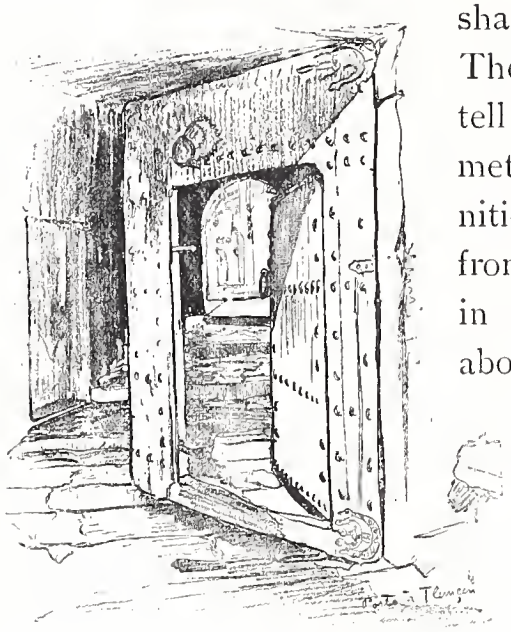
down the road, in zigzags across it, until they met the diligence. Each one waved in his hand a flower—white lily or rose—which they threw most gracefully through the window of our coupé. The Prince was their uncle, and they had come to welcome his return in this charming manner. The eldest boy, with sparkling eyes and smooth oval face, held the Prince's hand, and ran along with us, asking all sorts of questions after having gone through the usual greetings, which in themselves form considerable conversation, for the custom is to shake hands continually, raising and lowering them, while inquiring about the health of all the members of the family—that Allah may bless them, that all their undertakings may thrive, that their investments may prove profitable, etc.

Like the arrival of the diligence in all countries, the arrival of our monumental vehicle was an event in the day, and created the usual sensation; the drivers seem always to save their horses enough to make a kind of triumphal entry each trip. We passed through an avenue of elms (?) of very great height, their branches meeting, like the arches of the Seville Cathedral, above us, and towering over the immense and massive walls of the Mechouar, old citadel and stronghold of the French garrison of to-day.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT TLEMÇEN.

"SAOUARR—Saouarr!" shouted a mischievous-looking brown-skinned boy to his companions as he took possession of hand-bag and overcoat while I kicked the kinks out of my legs. He divined my profession at first sight, and was delighted when I confirmed his guesses, for he foresaw remunerative occupation for several days in carrying paint-box and canvas, besides sharing my luncheon in far-away excursions; but how long his whim would allow him to take advantage of a fresh opportunity was a difficult question to answer. As in Algiers, the devotion of such a useful assistant can never be counted on for twenty-four hours. My disappointments had been numerous and irritating, and I thought that now, having changed locality, air, and even race, I might be more fortunate. Race I say, for the ethnologist tells us that here, near the frontier of Morocco, one finds more of the Berbers, inhabitants of Algeria previous to the Arabs and the Turk, and that especially on the coast beyond Oran the type of the Berber is more accentuated. Alas! he possesses enough of what is commonly called Arab blood, without the question of the mixture of the Berber, Turk, or Moor, to make him thoroughly unreliable. A French writer says, "He who says Arab says thief, without exception." The Mohammed who told me the legends already related gave me his opinion of a lie,



DOOR AT TLEMÇEN.

shared, of course, by his brethren. The tales and legends the Arabs tell are full of rounded phrases and metaphors, and this was his definition of a lie: "A zephyr wafted from the lips is diffused and lost in the air; what is there tangible about a lie or any word uttered?"

Well, Mohammed, let us suppose that you had wafted several zephyrs of this nature in any business transaction, and that you should reap as a reward a fine black eye or a broken head, would you not think that the reflex action of that zephyr had accumulated considerable tangibility and force somewhere in the surrounding atmosphere?

Tlemçen stands on the northern slope of the mountain Lella Setta, thirty miles from the sea; through a gap in the distant hills towards Oran the Mediterranean is visible. The site of the town is most beautiful against the barren rocks at the back. Above the plateau, where the town is built, below it, and for miles around are groves of dense olive and fig trees, under which in the red earth wheat and flowers grow in fields well watered and cultivated. Several miles east of the town flows a river, which falls in cascades from a great height between walls of massive rock. A canal eight or nine miles in length, and about three feet broad and deep, is furnished unceasingly with water from this river. A hole only an inch or two in diameter allows the water to escape from the canal every few

yards, thus forming a system of continuous irrigation. All above the straight line of the canal is bare rock, with only a few patches of short and scant grass here and there; all below the canal is vegetation and life. What cities must Tlemçen and Mansoorah have been in their glory! An inexpressible feeling of sadness comes over one when contemplating the ruins which once were hundreds of mosques and palaces, besides smaller exquisite houses, with tiles, transparent onyx columns and pavements, flowers, fountains, and luxuriant gardens.

The half-dozen minarets still standing are of beautiful proportions and designs and in the best Moorish style. The sole reminder of one prince of Mansoorah is a minaret which is a wonder of beauty. Although the face of one side only, and portions of two other sides, remain, enough is there to make it a treasure of art. Fortunately what remains has been strengthened and preserved, as well by iron bars and new stone, as by a guardian who prevents the souvenir-seeker from clipping off an ornament here, stealing a tile there, and writing his idiotic name and date everywhere. When one finds the names of Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, or even Thackeray, engraved on the Pyramids or Aboosimbel or Karnak, one welcomes the historic sign; but when one sees the signature of Smith, Brown, or Hutchinson — if I remember rightly, one Hutchinson has repeated his name in tar, in letters a foot high, and covering delicate and beautiful hieroglyphics on the ceiling and walls of Egyptian tombs and temples—one longs to tar and feather and cut off the ears of the inane perpetrator. It is a deplorable fact that the number of valuable tiles, doors, and marbles which have been thrown in a heap in the museum at Tlemçen cannot receive the same attention as the minaret of Mansoorah, be classified, and preserved in a proper manner; objects are missing, no one seems to know why or how.

Aboo Yakoub laid siege to Tlemçen for four years; he had pitched his tents a mile from the city, with the intention of taking possession of it by a few days of starving out, but found that, having miscalculated either his strength or that of the Tlemçen king, he might as well make himself at home, so he began building a city of his own. The exquisite minaret, and the walls which indicate the size and shape of the mosque to which they belong, a few turrets, and immense blocks of concrete, which formed the fortified enclosure, square in general outline, and embracing two hundred and fifty acres, are all that remain to show the power of the rival prince.

We follow the old fortifications of Tlemçen proper along the lower edge of the plateau. Enormous cacti, bearing brilliant flowers and fruit, shrubs, and bushes of all kinds, grow luxuriantly. A ferocious Arab dog with a hoarse bark, showing his fangs, and every hair bristling, startles you as he rushes out, only stopped by a long chain. He is guarding a cherry or fig tree from the depredations of neighbors. You may know that you are near a hut or tent almost hidden in the undergrowth, through which you get a peep at the handsome face of a woman turning by a handle a round piece of granite pivoted on a similar piece. In this primitive mill, while she is grinding grain or corn, the flour falls all round the lower stone upon a cloth or sheepskin. Besides the natural screen formed of cactus and medlar bushes, there may be others made of reeds stuck close to each other in the ground, and tied together at intervals.

Bewitching little children scamper out to meet the passing stranger: "Sordi, mossou" (a sou, monsieur). And they say it with such a charming and insinuating manner, with so much rising and falling inflection in their childish voices, that you cannot resist their demand; but when you stop and put your hand in your pocket for a coin, they take to their heels until

you persuade them to come for their sordi and fear nothing. Then they come nearer, and make a sign for you to leave the piece of money on the ground. The Arabs are thus taught to be suspicious of every one from their early childhood. "No, you pretty little minx, you must take it from my hand." One of them ventures to come, and, once in possession of the coin, off they go as if demons were after them.

WASHING-PLACE WITHOUT THE WALLS, TLEMÇEN.

Farther on we came to a pool where women, negresses, and children were washing clothes, rugs, and sheepskins with all their might, and they paid very little attention to my guide and me. Their haïks were heaped on their heads, and in their girdles were tucked superfluous folds, while they held their undergarments and the outer gandoura between their knees, and with bare arms, legs, and feet they squeezed and twisted their wet

linen, each one turning in opposite directions, and at the same time they made their observations about the roumi (and the roumi was myself), who was delighted at finding this rare opportunity for studying such a galaxy of beauty, as well as ugliness, arrayed in an infinite variety of stuffs of every color—thick, thin, new, old, and worn. Yet, as with most Arab combinations of color when the natives are left to themselves, and are not influenced to use some of our cheap and vile dyes, arsenic green, so-called magenta, and the like, all was harmonious. The women of Tlemçen, faithful to the custom of half-civilized races, always wear a great deal of jewellery, and do not leave it aside even when hard at work. Perceiving that the women at this washing-place made considerable exhibition of their charms, I supposed that the men kept away, as they would get themselves into trouble if seen loitering about.

Farther on we came to a native tannery, and our noses were not wrong in suspecting its whereabouts. A dozen Arabs, all brown as if they had been fished out of the vats, were apparently so saturated with the atmosphere in which they were at work that their noses refused to smell any more. Of course this scene would not have been complete without three or four ferocious dogs.

Sidi-el-Halawi (the sweetmeat maker), without the walls, is a complete mosque, but, unfortunately, it is neglected. Birds build their nests where they please; the matting is old and full of dust, the fountain dilapidated and dry. The minaret and especially the eight onyx columns are of very beautiful design. The sidi probably has his anniversary, when his mosque enjoys a benefit, and is at least swept and illuminated.

Although it is dealing with personalities, I must give my reader the name of my guide, a Tlemçenite of much good-nature and suavity of manner, as well as dignity of bearing,

for the name is characteristic. Miloud ben Mohammed ben Koujahbass was familiarly known as Baba Miloud, or Père Miloud, throughout the town, owing, I suppose, first to his ad-

ONYX COLUMN AT SIDI-EL-HALAWI.

vanced age—sixty-eight—and to his being a "numerous grandfather," and, secondly, to the fact that he takes under his protecting wing all the strangers to his native soil, to show them the sights, and by his winning ways keeps them for some time under his wing at the rate of three francs a day, although he could show all there is to see in the town and environs in

one complete circle of the short hand of a watch, and that at leisure.

On our return from Sidi-el-Halawi we re-entered Tlemçen through one of the several great portals. Threescore beggars, some in rags, some without them, were basking in the noonday sun against the walls. Sheep and goats, on the other hand, were, like Miloud and I, skirting along the angle of the wall in shade to avoid the hot sun. Horses and donkeys stood under plantain-trees which bordered a high-road, and near tents where swarmed babies, young dogs, and kids, all mixed up with pans and kettles, wooden kouskous dishes, sieves, coils of rope, and sheepskins; in short, all the accessaries which correspond with the thousand-and-one utensils of the travelling mountebank encamped on the road-side, with whom we are familiar in the north.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WANDERINGS IN THE TOWN.

WITHIN the gates long rows of shops do a good business, wholesale and retail, in calicoes, prints, handkerchiefs, cheap woollen and cotton dry goods, of bright reds and yellows, common laces, and cobweb gauzes, gold braid, etc. Of all these articles the handkerchiefs are the most used — some being decorated with geometrical designs, others with birds and ducks, others being plain black with colored borders, and gold thread woven in. Women and children use them to tie round the head in various ways, men to tie up their haïk, which is rolled in front so as not to interfere with walking; the poor man, who dispenses with a turban, wears a handkerchief in a roll round his head, leaving the crown bare. Housewives use the large ones for tying up bundles and covering dishes. But, if it must be said, the use for which this convenient little square of cotton, silk, or linen is intended, and which we are accustomed to consider so indispensable, is not recognized among this people, or to a very limited extent. Next to the handkerchief-shop comes a grocer's, with jars of oil and butter more or less rancid—jars which could well figure in the pantomime of Aii-Baba—strings of onions, garlic, splendid red peppers, hung outside against the walls — lentils, semolino, in boxes and baskets. The next may be a saddler's shop, with piles of leather heaped on shelves. The merchants were in-

dustriously at work, embroidering with skill and good taste the backs and pommels of red saddle-covers, pouches and purses, in gold, silver, and silken threads. Few of the shops have a second story. In large market-squares, well shaded with big trees, dealers in second-hand clothing, old iron, fire-arms, fruit, pottery, spread their goods; children play around in bright costumes, like tropical birds let loose, and crowds of lazy men lounge in groups at cafés, watching games of draughts.

At the grand mosque in the centre of the town great numbers congregate at noon for worship. The round basin in the middle of the great open court, paved with slabs of Algerine onyx and with bricks, is surrounded by dumb devotees, performing their ablutions with much noise of splashing of water and expectoration. I was allowed to continue my study in the court while the service was going on. With the regularity of our sect of Shakers the squatting battalions of Moslems bow, kiss the floor, rise to their feet, kneel again in long rows, filling the mosque from one side to the other, only separated by the large square columns, of which there are over seventy. A grand chant of sixteen or twenty measures is often repeated at regular intervals by the whole assembly. All else is absolute silence, save the sonorous voice of the mufti reciting verses of the Koran.

On the other side of the central public square is a school, a small Babel of sixty boys or more. The intellectual training of children is very limited, and causes but little anxiety to parents, who teach them in early childhood to repeat, "I testify that Mohammed is God's apostle," and to hate Christians. The remainder of their education consists in the acquirement of a few rudimentary rules of arithmetic, and the continuance of committing to memory as much of the Koran as possible. [Let it be understood that we are referring to the purely Arab schools, and

not to others, where French influence is gaining ground. One of the largest buildings in Algiers is the Lyceum, where about eight hundred Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans are educated together.] The old professor of the school on the public square has assistants of different ages for the younger boys, so that there is a continual running stream of big and little voices, each trying to outcry the other; higher and more shrill they yell as they take in a fresh breath, and repeat what they know at such a rate that it seems impossible that any one should distinguish one syllable from another. In fact, during my stay I often asked my young factotum of the day what was being recited; his only answer was a significant shrug of the shoulders: "Je sais pas, mossou—connais pas ça, moi." Allah—Illah-Allah-Achbah-Mohammed-wally-golly-jolly-holly, repeated at the top of your voice, and at lightning speed, a thousand times a minute if you can, will give you, my reader, a faint idea of what one of the youngsters is saying; then multiply by the number engaged in this noisy method of committing the Koran to memory, and you may get still nearer the effect. Children are made to recite in as loud a voice as possible in order to strengthen their lungs—a requirement especially necessary for a muezzin, who calls to prayer from the top of the minaret. Those who are to follow a trade are sometimes taught writing and a little useful arithmetic. To vary the monotony of these recitations at school the lad is occasionally taken across the knees of the old teacher, who sits tailor fashion, holds the offender by the ankles, and administers blows with a rod on the soles of his feet—a mild form of bastinado.

CHAPTER XIX.

ABOUT THE CHILDREN.

THE pupil's stationery and books at the Arab school do not cost his parents a great amount. A slate, so called, but made of hard-wood, is the medium of knowledge. The surface becomes as smooth as glass by repeated application of fine pipe-clay, which is moistened with water and rubbed on with the fingers. When the lad has filled his slate on both sides with dictations from the Koran, written in ink with a reed-pen, and has committed its contents to memory, he washes it and renews the coating of clay. A mistake is easily corrected with the wet finger. The Arab boy has all the mischief of any other school-boy, and as he must break, chew, crack, nick, and mend something, his slate ends by being a kind of one-horse-shay put together again with glue, nails, and bits of tin and brass, cross-beams and corners; the marvellous clay fills up all the chinks. On the wall hangs a large blackboard; on the floor-matting lie burnooses and shoes, but no primers, grammars, geographies, or other ink-stained accessaries which strew the benches and desks of our schools. Groups of dear little black-eyed boys from three to five years old, other groups of different classes, youths of seventeen, eighteen, all wearing their red tarbooshes with big blue tassels, jackets and burnooses of all shades and colors, enlivened by streaks and spots of sunlight sifted through the intricate designs of the windows and stained glass, make a charming kaleidoscope. All around is the plain

YOUNG GIRL OF TLEMÇEN.

whitewashed wainscoting, considerably soiled and stained by the backs, hands, and heads that lean against it, and above are exquisite arabesques in stucco; for the interior, though somewhat dilapidated, is untouched by the restorer's hand, and remains one of the very finest examples of Moorish art. The building was a small mosque, the ornamented and painted wooden ceiling of which, almost in ruins, is supported by arches and onyx columns.

Wending our way through the streets, we passed jewellers' shops—that is, dingy little recesses where workers in silver made anklets, haïk-pins, bracelets, with rude instruments—with furnace, bellows, and anvil that would become a blacksmith. A juvenile Israelite, with the instincts of race and of the trade which he was destined to continue after his father, implored me to purchase something while he jingled his wares before my eyes.

I must again refer to the children, for this street was teeming with little Tlemçenites who had never left, and probably never would leave, their native town. The boys, when running about, wear nothing but a long white chemise and dark blue vest; but of all bewitching creatures in the world, the little girls can scarcely be surpassed. They are everywhere, and must strike a stranger, certainly an artist, as a prominent feature of interest. Some are going to the baker's, carrying unbaked loaves piled on a plank on the head; others with little brass-bound buckets brimming with milk; singly, in crowds, always fascinating, not only pretty, but arrayed in an infinite variety of costumes, they dart from shadow into sunlight, and disappear in a twinkling round a corner or through a door-way. They wear, first, a white chemise with gauze sleeves, over it a gandoura, or chemise without sleeves, and reaching nearly to the ankles, usually of printed calico, glaring in color and with spots, stripes, birds, branches, and leaves. This gandoura is sometimes of rich brocade or light silk; over the first they often wear a second

gandoura of tulle with a design in it, ordinarily nothing more or less than common white lace curtain stuff. All the materials hang limp, and flutter when they run. Round the waist a broad *ceinture*, and over the shoulders a little bodice. On the head a conical cap, almost always of crimson velvet more or less ornamented with gold thread. Children and unmarried girls wear the caps with a strap under the chin; married women tie them on with a colored handkerchief, besides the strap. Their hair is fringed square just over the eyebrows, and plaited down the back; the operation of dyeing it dark brownish wine-color requires several days, during which time they appear certainly at a disadvantage. Henna is made into a mushy paste and plastered all over the head, as much as the hair, being tied up all over, can hold in place, and even more, for it runs down the neck, the cheeks, and into the ears. The process gives somewhat the appearance of a head modelled in wax, with the hair studied in masses. The palms of the hands, the fingers, and the feet and toes are also stained. A charming little neighbor of mine, who lived near my hotel window, was missing for several days; I afterwards found her sitting mournfully near her own door-sill, all the forearm and hand very much swollen; she had been undergoing the painful operation of having her person beautified by lozenges, stars, and stripes, pricked in with needles and dyed with Indian-ink, or something of the kind. To make one job of it, she had her head plastered with henna at the same time. So much for coquetry. I offered my sympathy. "Ah, my little friend, to be beautiful you must suffer," I said to her, and my young factotum put my words into good Arabic. She had nothing the matter with her heels, however, although they were of a deep burnt-sienna, for she made use of them to carry herself into her house in a flash, forgetting for the moment her lame arm, which she had been so tenderly nursing.

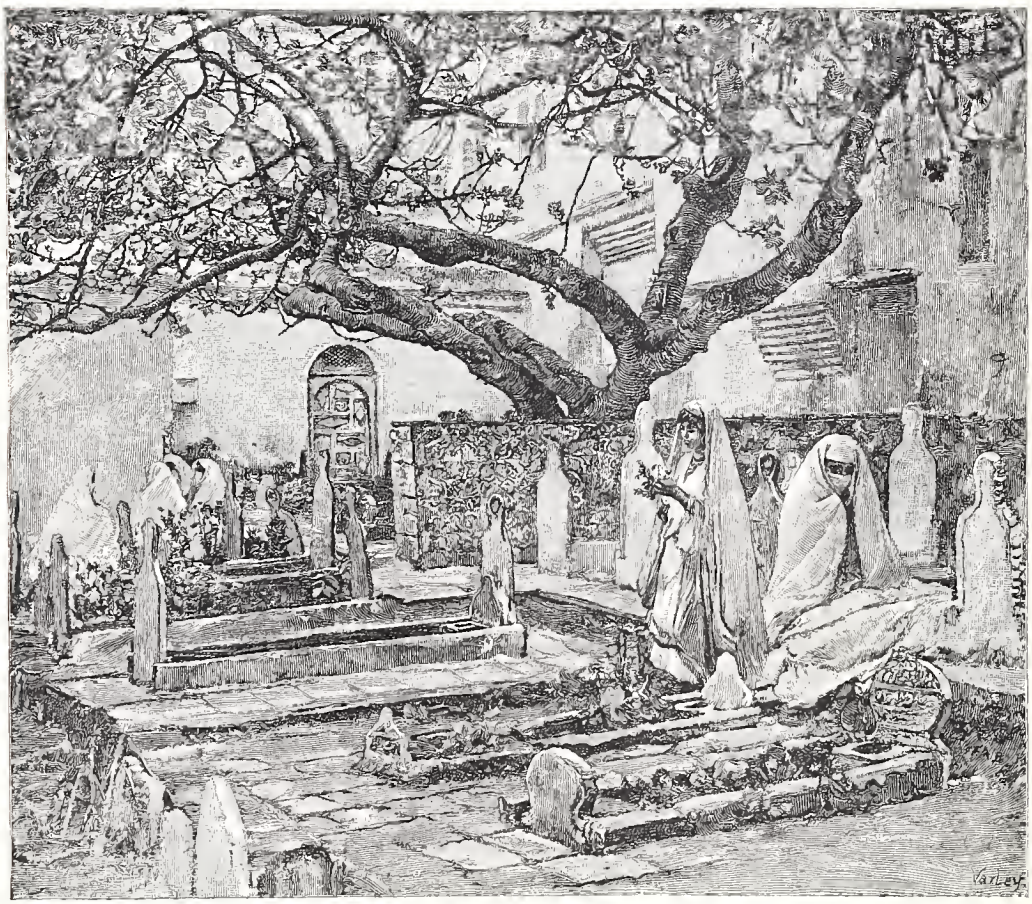
CHAPTER XX.

BOU-MÉDINE.

ABOUT a mile to the east of Tlemçen stands the village of Bou-Médine, on a more elevated slope. As a town it is dead; one café may be said to be in a semi-flourishing condition.

The old patron saint, Sidi Bou-Médine, or Médian, sleeps peacefully in his khouba, ever cared for and continually visited. The keeper is unceasingly running in and out with his bunch of keys, to open the door of the khouba to pilgrims and visitors, from all of whom he receives a gratuity. The khouba is covered with silk draperies, overhung with flags, *ex votoes*, candles, ostrich eggs, inscriptions under glass. The open court which gives access to the tomb is reached by about fifteen steps leading down from another narrow outer court. Four beautiful onyx columns, and the old marble well, are very interesting. Two buckets at the end of a long chain have so often been let down and drawn up with the sacred water during the last six hundred years that the marble is worn in grooves fifteen inches deep. Small tiles—green, brown, yellow, white—each with intricate ornaments in relief, once covered the floor, but souvenir-seekers have dug up and pocketed so many that the keeper is now made responsible to the French Government for every one remaining. While making studies in the delightfully quiet retreat, I had a rare opportunity for observing the women who

came to burn incense at the door of the khouba, and to implore of the sidi—*Monsieur* Bou-Médine—his aid and blessing. (They also call upon the Prophet, addressing him *Sidi* or *Mr.* Mohammed.) They came down the steps still veiled, but seeing only a roumi making a study, they let go the haïk, which they hold so



CEMETERY OF SIDI ABD-EL-RHAMAN, ALGIERS.

tightly that one eye peers out at a triangular opening only large enough to see through. They do not wear the veil as in Algiers. It is to be remarked as a curious fact that the costume of the pure-blooded women and children of Tlemçen is almost identical with that worn by the *Jewesses* of Constantine, farther removed

than Algiers, in which latter city the costume, though similar in some points, is quite different in others. The dress of the Tlemçen women also resembles that of Morocco; but this is not surprising, as the frontier of that country is only about forty-five miles distant.

Opposite the tomb of the sidi is the mosque named after him. This lovely specimen of pure Moorish architecture is in an almost perfect state of preservation, and it so forcibly recalls the Alhambra that one feels almost as though standing with one foot in this celebrated palace and the other in the mosque of Bou-Médine. A dozen steps lead up to gigantic doors faced with bronze plaques about a sixteenth of an inch in thickness and of geometrical design—a *chef-d'œuvre* of the kind. The doors are fastened inside with bolts of bronze nearly three feet long and about three inches in diameter, the vertical bolt being slipped through a hole in the horizontal one. The tiled courts are the play-ground for our little favorites, the children. Having worked in the sacred precincts for several consecutive days, I finally succeeded in getting some of the children to pose. Of course the attractive and prettily dressed creatures had every objection to posing, but enjoyed the joke of lending portions of their clothing to their little friends, whose poverty and need of gaining a few sous outweighed their hereditary scruples against being portrayed. I am tempted to say that there were three hundred, but I believe a dozen children is nearer the real number, that flew around me in the greatest excitement. My model having completed her attire with one gandoura too long, the other too short, and with a bodice so tight under the arms that it almost lifted her off the ground, began asking me at the end of five minutes if I had not finished my sketch, and declared that she was entitled to a franc for every five minutes beyond the price stipulated. All her friends supported her in her claims,

and declared that they would pull her hair out if she stayed another minute, and wipe out my sketch if I detained her. In this pandemonium I worked with my hair standing on end, and my nerves almost beyond control; a menagerie on fire could not have afforded more excitement. My only way out of this Babel was, after half an hour's work under the trying circumstances, to offer a franc to the eldest of the party to clear the mosque. This offer was accepted, and I was soon left alone to put in my background.

Of course my companion Miloud was asleep at the café when I most needed him. This was altogether an eventful day; from my first breakfast I was destined to partially fast till the evening, as will be seen. My substantial meal for noonday had been prepared and arranged in a basket, of which Miloud took charge. While I made a morning study within the mosque, and my worthy guide snoozed in a corner, the basket had been left outside the door, which I had closed on account of the cold draught. When I felt that work could go no further without sustenance I woke Miloud and asked for breakfast; but, lo and behold! on swinging back the ponderous doors we disturbed poor pussy, who went flying down the steps with the carcass of our chicken, for nothing else remained for her to finish but the small bottle of wine and a few eggs, which rolled out and followed her downstairs. Our humpty-dumpties had their fall, but we gathered up their broken skulls and divided the remains, and with bread and wine, the latter of which was left entirely to me, thanks to Miloud's scruples, we fared as best we could; and then he repaired to the neighboring café and brought me back a cup of hot coffee, which at that time seemed the best I had ever drunk. My Moslem friend requested me, while breakfasting in the court, not to spill a drop of wine, for it would defile the mosque, and offend the Prophet and his own religious principles. With this request

DOORS OF THE MOSQUE.

I was pleased to comply. Lady friends told me that in visiting this mosque and tomb they had taken off their shoes and stockings at the door; which act of consideration and respect for the keeper's religion so much pleased him that he insisted

upon having them come to his own house, contiguous to the mosque, to see his family and take coffee, which cordial reception they very much enjoyed. This happened on a chill rainy day, and the outer court, steps, and inner courts were large expanses of tiling to be crossed before reaching shelter and the matting within; the act was, in consequence, all the more appreciated.

My lucky star guided me early one morning to the mosque, and assisted me in gaining access while the women of the town were in the midst of their work of general washing and scrubbing with buckets of water (taken from the central fountain) and short brooms. They were attired in the same semi-dishabille as described in other pages—barefooted, their clothes tucked above the knees, their sleeves tied on the back between the shoulders, and wearing a profusion of jewellery. The following week my star met with more difficulty, for the keeper was prepared to shut the outer door in my face; but with the silver key so powerful in that country I was admitted. Continuing to use the same instrument, I was allowed to see the sacrifice of a sheep in the court of the keeper's private dwelling. In the centre was an octagonal fountain filled with plants; at one side another smaller fountain of marble, scalloped and ribbed, and surrounded by a square basin prettily ornamented with tiles. Everything was scrupulously clean, like the dress of the handsome keeper. The faithful Moslem whose crops had been productive, or whose prayers had been answered to his satisfaction in some way, was apparently a tent Arab who had promised a sheep to Sidi Bou-Médine if he would intercede with Allah for his benefit; for they wait until their demands are answered according to their desire before they make the sacrifice. A large portion of every animal sacrificed is the rightful part of the keeper; the remainder goes to the poor. The bleating sheep,

apparently apprehensive of something wrong, was dragged to a hole in the corner of the court through which the water ran from the fountain, and became an easy victim to the knife. It was not altogether a pleasant thought to entertain that the Mohammedan would have held my own neck over the running water with about as much conviction of having fulfilled his duty to the teachings of the Prophet. Near the steps of the mosque is a large trough of marble filled with running water, where these sacrifices are usually made. A room to the left of the entrance was used as a school—the only one, I believe, in the deserted village. The privileged boys were taught here, and made the court ring for six or seven hours a day with their recitations, while the girls, who receive no education, spent most of their time in play. They never forgot the blessings which they coveted, for the latch and iron knocker on the door leading to the tomb of the sidi was rattled and raised every now and then by one or the other, accompanied with plaintive and earnest ejaculations, "Ya sidi! ya sidi!" in order to attract the attention of the marabout; then off they would scamper again at their romps, and my easel was generally the pivot round which they turned and danced.

At noon the special keeper of the mosque alone filled the office of muezzin, and called to prayer from his minaret. The tiles ornamenting the tower and the roofs glistened and sparkled under the mid-day sun. Blue smoke curled from the dwellings. In the courts of the houses we could catch glimpses of the inmates preparing their portion of soup or making coffee; for we often took our breakfast under a tree higher up against the hill overlooking the roofs of Bou-Médine, the flat terraces, and the houses below. The voice of the muezzin was trained to carry a great distance, and as he repeated "Allah,

Illah!" towards the four quarters of the earth, prolonging and swelling the latter syllables with a gradually rising inflection, ending suddenly with the last breath left in his lungs, it seemed as if in the absolute stillness around us the sonorous waves could float across the vast plain stretching out below, and quivering under the sun, to the Mediterranean beyond the distant hills.

CHAPTER XXI.

MILOUD.

RETURNING to Tlemçen, we passed nearly every day through the cemetery, where groups of women mourners were huddled together, talking in whispers over a new grave. The new tombstones, a slab at the head, another at the feet, were rounded at the top, and on the flat surfaces the inscriptions (in relief) were painted in bright colors.

Miloud and I talked over the events of the day, and he aired some peculiar views on various subjects. He informed me that the large lizards, *bellam*, which would dart across our path were the destroyers of the dead bodies. "Now, Miloud, why do you not educate the girls?"

"Oh, *mais non.* The girls are of no consequence; they can help to do housework and wash the pavement of the mosques, and wait till they are married—good for nothing but man's use and pleasure. All misfortune in this world comes through the women; they are to blame for everything that goes wrong, and when a husband gets tired of his wife he has a perfect right to shunt her off."

"But, Miloud, you may not be enlightened according to our views; you need to make a trip to our northern countries, where you will find that I am not the only one to uphold the rights of the fair sex."

He stopped me short in the road, and with his forefinger to

his forehead, he said, gravely, "Really, monsieur, it is incomprehensible; you look like an intelligent man, and seem to know a good many things and judge of them in a sensible manner, just as I do; but about the women I cannot understand how you can talk in this way. Eh?"

To change the subject for a moment, I asked him for my overcoat, and remarked that the evening was growing chilly, and as we had been walking fast, I thought it prudent for me to put it on, giving my reasons for avoiding cold. He saw in my remarks signs of reasoning power, and I was flattered when he said to me, "Ah, that is just what I was going to tell you to do, to put on your overcoat. Did you think of that yourself? You have indeed some good ideas. Bravo!"

You will not be astonished, reader, after the above example, to learn that Miloud was a guide as far as showing one which path to take to make short-cuts to the different places of interest, but that he was found wanting in information. "Now, Miloud ben Mohammed ben Koujahbass ben Alexander the Great, how did those corner-stones to the left, and this large one in the middle bearing Roman inscriptions, find their way into the construction of this beautiful minaret built by the Moorish kings of Tlemçen?" I asked as we stopped on our roundabout way home before the ruins of a mosque near the ancient walls overgrown with weeds, grass, and bramble.

"Ah, monsieur, you see my friends here" (pointing to several workmen making excavations near by) "are digging up bricks and pieces of statues and columns and stones of the same kind; but, ahem! monsieur, just open your guide-book, turn to Tlemçen, ruins of Aghadir, and you will find out all about it."

CHAPTER XXII.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

MILOUD reminded me that two wedding processions would take place that evening in Tlemçen, and that we had better leave the Roman remains for another day, have dinner, and meet on the Place at the café immediately after, for the festivities were to begin as soon as it was dark enough for the torches to make their effect. As he had gone through the ceremony himself once upon a time, he told me how such things were managed and how marriage contracts were made. The grandmothers of the proposed bride and bridegroom on the fathers' side have an informal and preliminary talk as to whether the alliance is possible. They, too, appreciate the wisdom of the saying, "La nuit porte conseil;" and if the next morning the old ladies still find no objection, the matter is carried on by the fathers, who come to an agreement about the sum of money to be paid by the bridegroom; this varies, of course, with the standing and wealth of the parties concerned. The bride is sometimes an orphan in possession of a fortune, in which case she can make her own terms and marry more from her own choice, but ordinarily the bride and bridegroom are chosen by the parents. The young man may never have seen his intended, but it not unfrequently happens that they have been playmates until the time when it is deemed proper, and according to custom, that the girl should be veiled.

having attained the age of twelve or thirteen years. In Algiers, however, little girls of good family, six or eight years old, are seen wearing the veil. The girl has this advantage over the young man, that, through the triangular opening of her haïk, she can always, though perhaps with but one eye, get a good look at her future husband. The ceremony may take place at any time of the day or in the evening; the working tradesman chooses the evening, while others, men of means and leisure, prolong the feasts and receptions to three or four days.

The family and male friends assemble at the bridegroom's house and join in the procession through the town. The bride is then conducted to his dwelling, where she waits for him in an inner chamber, seated on a bed, as upright and motionless as an idol, and holding in her hands a folded handkerchief. As to the reason for this custom, Miloud's only explanation was, "C'est l'habitude, comme ça." The bridegroom enters the room alone, removes the veil, and looks for the first time upon a face perhaps entirely strange to him, perhaps that of a former playmate—the face of his *fiancée* of a month or of several years. At this moment the women population, the invited guests in other parts of the house, as well as the uninvited females who are peeping into the courts from every available position on the neighboring terraces, break out in their semi-barbaric method of showing their approval with their "You-you-you-you-you!" Screeching clarinets, blown by the pair of cheeks of a professional musician, distended by habitual practice until they might be used for a blacksmith's bellows, big drums beaten with the ends of curved sticks, small double drums beaten with long straight sticks, tambourines and derboukas thumped upon with callous hands, create an infernal racket—noise is too mild to express it—while the ever-stirring element, the children, ranging in years from babyhood to the

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING, ALGIERS.

toddling age, are everywhere, and enjoy themselves in their own unrestrained manner, gorgeous in their best attire, like parrots and pheasants.

The bridegroom, on reappearing in the court, is made to sit on a cushion, while a friend each side of him waves a large colored handkerchief about his head, playfully brushing it across his face. There seemed to be no particular reason for this nonsensical performance, and it was not much noticed by the crowd. "C'est l'habitude," Miloud again remarked.

I witnessed these scenes and demonstrations, and became, somewhat to my astonishment, an invited guest, inasmuch as I was pressed to take a seat among the native spectators, and to help them make away with an enormous dish of kouskous—a little to my embarrassment, it must be acknowledged, for I was the observed of all observers, being the only stranger present. Whether I had an appetite or not, I felt it incumbent upon me to do justice to the cordial invitation of the host, who spoke French well, and was altogether most courteous. My only way of returning his hospitality, besides wishing him happiness and prosperity, was to pass around my cigarette case. After the repast the narghileh was lighted, and the rose-water in the engraved and gilded glass bottle through which the smoke passed was set bubbling by the inhalations from four mouth-pieces at the end of as many long tubes, and the men each took a whiff or two at the friendly smoking establishment. As in similar fêtes in Algiers, the women looking down from the terrace, or from the balcony of the upper story, when there is one, into the court below, consider themselves enough at home to enjoy the sight of what is going on without the constraint of the veil and haïk over the face, and they often partially remove it. The men are not supposed to turn their eyes upward at all. My curiosity, though natural enough, was upon several occasions

reprimanded, from which fact I learned that at all public fêtes the women come to see, but to be seen only by others of their sex.

In some parts of Algeria and Tunis a curious custom is still practised at the moment the bride enters the room: the bridegroom, walking backward, holds a dagger, and the bride follows him, holding the point of the blade in the tips of her fingers.

Another custom, not less strange, consists in the partial martyrdom of the bride, who stands against a column in the public place, and under the gaze of the people, for two hours or more, and in an erect position, her eyes closed, her arms close at her sides, her feet resting only on the narrow base of the column. The bride sometimes collapses and faints during the ordeal.

Let us go back to the beginning of the procession which preceded the festivities just described. In the midst of the throng, moving slowly up the avenue of great trees, the bridegroom rode on a black horse, under the brilliant light of torches and candles arrayed on all sides in pyramids; barrel hoops of different sizes, wrapped in tinsel-paper and bits of ribbon, were used for the purpose. Several of these small monuments were borne on poles which rested on the shoulders of young men, frequently replaced by others who hustled each other for the honor. Two friends lead the caparisoned horse by the bridle, one on either side, while another continually switches the animal's knees to make him prance and to prevent him from advancing too rapidly—much to the poor beast's annoyance. Nothing could be seen of the bridegroom's person except the end of his nose, his mustache, and his feet. He covered himself completely with his burnoose, the cape drawn over his head, with the tassels hanging over and hiding his eyes. I took him

for a gay young man of twenty-five years, but found him later a man of forty-five, who had become tired of bachelorhood and had decided to marry, though late in life for an Arab. Musicians went first, making all the noise possible, in the minor key as usual. Two professional violinists (celebrated?) led their orchestra; one of them played on a modern violin, the other performed with a bow on an instrument something like a guitar, both of them holding their violins as one does a 'cello. Though these were Jews, the Arabs accepted their aid as paid professionals.

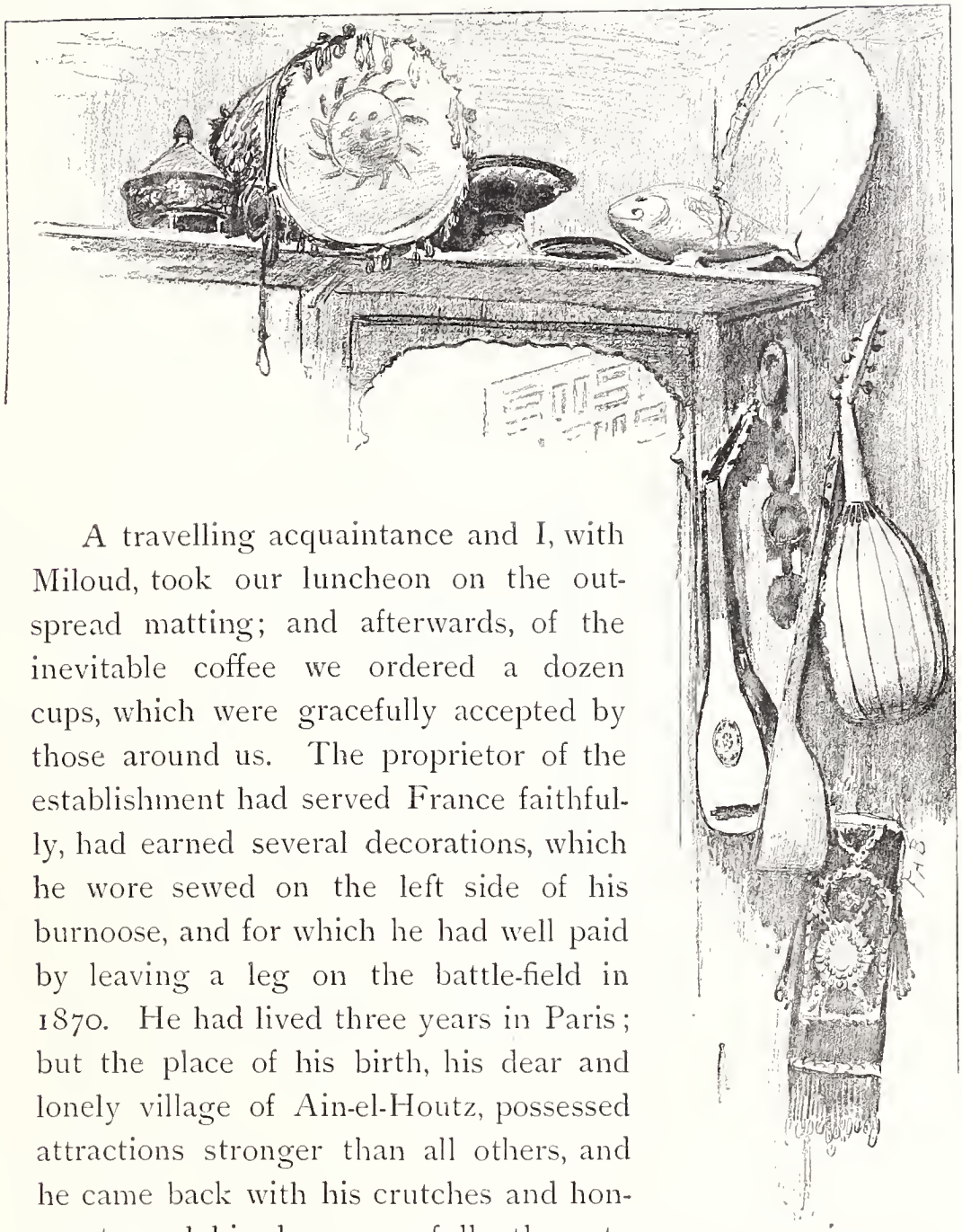
CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LEGEND OF AIN-EL-HOUTZ.

OFF in the plain lies a village which takes its name from a spring of legendary interest. Ain-el-Houtz, Source-aux-poissons, is a small pond filled with fish, but at the present day it does not seem as if it could have been a romantic lake in days of yore. A charming legend has survived several centuries, and runs thus:

Djafar, a prince of noble blood, son of a king of Tlemçen, was one day hotly pursuing a gazelle, when suddenly he saw Aïcha, the beautiful young daughter of the sheik of the village, bathing in a retired nook under olive-trees and weeping-willows, and oleanders laden with pink and white flowers. Aïcha was startled by the gazelle, and in her fright at seeing the prince, who now gave chase to her instead, she fled until she came to the spring, into which she plunged to escape his grasp, and immediately the chaste maiden was changed into a fish of brilliant hues and of gold and silver sheen.

A dead village almost hidden among cacti thriving under a scorching sun, Ain-el-Houtz had a centre of attraction, one café, which stood under the shade of an aged oak. The great outstretched branches and dense foliage allowed that summer enemy, the sun, to struggle through only in flickering spots. A rivulet gurgled under the café and ran off into the fields of wheat which it watered through many a little canal with muddy banks.



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

A travelling acquaintance and I, with Miloud, took our luncheon on the outspread matting; and afterwards, of the inevitable coffee we ordered a dozen cups, which were gracefully accepted by those around us. The proprietor of the establishment had served France faithfully, had earned several decorations, which he wore sewed on the left side of his burnoose, and for which he had well paid by leaving a leg on the battle-field in 1870. He had lived three years in Paris; but the place of his birth, his dear and lonely village of Ain-el-Houtz, possessed attractions stronger than all others, and he came back with his crutches and honors to end his days peacefully there, to be the hero of his native town, where his inexhaustible soldier-tales would be most appreciated—"a big toad in a small puddle." But a cloud came over our

hitherto cordial reception, and our parting was cold, for my travelling companion of the day was a young Prussian officer, who was proud of his position and was very frank in mentioning the fact. "I am a Prussian, and being fond of travel, I have come to see your village." The old *spahi* drew himself up, and closing his lips firmly together, looked at him for several seconds without winking and with a perceptible scowl, then turned his head away and rearranged his burnoose, throwing it over the other shoulder. He naturally suspected me to be of the same nationality, and I probably became also an object of his antipathy.

The café was in the immediate neighborhood, and under the religious shadow, of the mosque, a rude whitewashed building surrounded by a wall still more rudely built. Only one nook, where lay the marabout, was cared for; the thick dust and stones that lay in the court and in the dry fountain afforded hiding-places for scorpions and a rendezvous for lizards. The minaret tapered towards the top, was surmounted by a lop-sided dome, and was ornamented at each of the four corners by a triangular turret. The muezzin, a patriarch of nearly ninety years, dragged himself up the irregular stone stair-way, and passing through an aperture meant for a door-way, first poking out his big turban, then a bony hand clutching a long staff, stood for a few moments, and after having recovered his breath, he made an attempt in a husky and scarcely audible voice to call the Sélam—one more added to the many thousands he had uttered from his few inches of terrace, and one more which might have been his last.

We drove to another village farther away in the plain, which has been of late years, if one might judge by appearances, much enlarged by modern French houses, and has become a garrison surrounded by a square wall. Black cypresses and the tops of

terraces whitewashed in patches, a church tower, and a leaning minaret showed themselves above the yellowish fortifications. A straight and hard dusty road led through an avenue of trees to the portal. A great square, adapted for military exercises, with patches of grass under the young trees, was the centre of the village, and lay in front of the barracks. Passing through the old Arab quarter, where the different habitations are separated by cacti with enormous and tortuous trunks (six or eight inches in diameter), and by reeds planted in the ground, we came to the market-place. On entering the gates, a gendarme accosted me to inquire as to my credentials, and was satisfied with a few words in answer.

The market-place was a jumble of all sorts of goods for sale, rows of tents with boxes for counters, where prints, calicoes, second-hand burnooses and other clothing were spread; in short, an Arab assemblage, including brown camels, donkeys, horses, their cumbersome saddles and thick blankets laid aside while they whisked their tails in the shade; dozens of others tied just above the hoofs of the fore-legs with a long rope, each end of which was firmly picketed in the ground; goats, sheep, dogs, snake-charmers, jugglers—all looked as if they had been shaken together in a basket and turned out in a generally mixed-up mass, like a picture that an artist had commenced and had changed the composition of twenty times, leaving a donkey's head, a camel's leg, a negro's toes, in places where they did not belong.

A little removed from the crowd, half a dozen swarthy Morocco snake-charmers were entertaining a circle of spectators. A tall fanatic gesticulated himself into a violent perspiration, the veins in his forehead and neck swelling more and more as he continued his harangue, calling upon his admirers to believe that by faith they could do as he did, play with the terrible ce-

rastes (Arabic *léfaa*, short, horned viper), with the scorpion, and could pass skewers through their flesh without drawing blood, besides other tricks known to the Aissaoui, of which sect he might be looked upon as a leader. From a leather bag he would occasionally draw half-way out a long black snake, which would pull itself back into the darkness, to give the assembly a foretaste of the performance which would commence as soon as his collection of coin had reached a certain amount. He held by its tail all the while a cerastes of yellowish dust color, a color which makes this species the more dangerous, as it cannot be readily distinguished from the sand of the desert, where it half buries itself. It was too sluggish to lift its head more than half-way up to the hand that held it. He dropped it several times, but expertly caught it again behind the ears before it reached the bare legs of the spectators, who quitted their places and enlarged the circle in less time than I can inform my reader of the fact. It is more than probable that the venom is always removed by the charmers from these reptiles, whose bite may cause death within half an hour.

The prelude and collection took more time than the real performance, which consisted in his allowing the long harmless snakes, harmless as far as their bite was concerned, to half strangle him and seek a retreat round his waist inside his shirt. We were told that holes through the cheeks and arms were allowed to heal while a straw or splint was left in them, and that the jugglers always put the skewers through the same holes made for them.

It is said of the scorpion, that if surrounded by a ring of fire through which it cannot escape, it will curl its tail over its back and sting itself to death in the head; but to raise its tail into the shape of a very much curved bird's claw is a natural movement of defence, and probably not for the purpose of

bringing the sting at the end of it up to its head. More than likely it is worry, with suffocation, if not actual scorching, that kills it.

The opera-house, to return to Tlemçen, is a large hall where stranded companies with voices not up to the mark still find admirers. The *chef d'orchestre* constitutes the entire orchestra, which is a piano on which he performs and keeps time by nods and bows to the singers.

The audience, the evening that we saw "La Dame Blanche," was composed of officers, their families, and other French residents—in the gallery, Arab soldiers and a miscellaneous assemblage. Criticism being the prerogative of the gallery, this one made use of its acknowledged rights; and when the duo, "Je ne puis rien comprendre," was sung, "Nor I, either, old pumpkin-head," is a sample of the observations made during the performance. The most provincial and characteristic source of amusement was the gambling-table—for very modest sums—of *Petits-Chevaux*, which was placed under the gallery in close proximity to the bar. Drinks were served, and smoking was allowed during the whole entertainment, but everything was abandoned during the *entr'actes* for *Petits-Chevaux*, of which the *chef d'orchestre* was a constant patron, as well as the singers when they could escape from their duties of the stage and dressing-room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETURN AND FAREWELL TO ALGIERS.

I TOOK my departure from Tlemçen by night in the diligence. Although in June, the nights were cold, and the days had not yet become very hot. Doomed as I was to find myself next morning at Ain-Temouchent, with cricks in my neck and pains in my back, there was nothing to do but grin and bear it. A young officer was on his way to Algiers for a holiday, having spent a year at a garrison a hundred miles farther south. It was the most desolate place imaginable, according to his account—rocks, sand, no rain, nothing to do after early morning exercises, no society; he had seen one lady in a year, the wife of an officer, who had remained with her husband for some months. A dark cloud in this desert was watched with the greatest interest, and there was joy in the camp when a few drops of rain fell; officers and soldiers, bareheaded, and holding out their tongues, all ran out with the hope of getting refreshed for a moment from the devouring sirocco and to see the parched landscape under a different aspect. These southerly military stations are instituted for the purpose of preventing the Bedouins from concentrating their forces and instigating insurrections. According to the opinion of many, however, these stations are unnecessary.

Algiers, on our return, had assumed more of the true color of an Oriental town. The middle of June, with its warm sum-

NEIGHBORS ON THE TERRACE, ALGIERS.

mer evenings, enticed the inhabitants out of their houses; the streets were lined and the door-ways of the cafés crowded with men who had laid their burnooses aside or had left them at home, and who lolled about, smoking, singing, applauding musicians and dancers. The latter were boys or courtesans, who performed at the weirdly lighted backs of the cafés. These resorts had been redecorated with crude paintings of ships, locomotives, lions, birds, for the great fête of the Ramadan, which had just begun.

A "celebrated artist," proprietor of a café and *m'chacha*—hashish smoker's retreat—took a certain interest in my studies, but assured me that his efforts were accompanied with far greater difficulties than mine, while he called my attention to his recent productions on the freshly whitened walls. Everything was arranged for the delight of smokers—new matting, small tables upon which stood large blue glass urns containing water and goldfish, vessels of various shapes filled with flowers and plants. the columns surrounded by ribbons and colored tissue-paper cut in fanciful designs.

An artist who painted in Algiers a picture representing the interior of a m'chacha, procured models who were *habitués* of such places; the most depraved were complete victims to their passion for the weed, and were brought to him on a litter; one of them, emaciated and idiotic by the continued practice, died one night while being carried home from the studio. But to see such scenes requires time and trouble, for one may be shown into a m'chacha, so called, and see nothing but Arabs enjoying a comfortable pipe.

The festival of the Ramadan lasts about thirty days, or between two moons, a rigid fast by day and a feast by night. Every three years it falls a month later, so that when it happens in midsummer, when from sunrise to sunset the Moham-

FATMA.

medan must deny himself every pleasure, eating and drinking nothing and smoking not at all, it is accompanied by serious inconvenience, especially in the case of the traveller (unless he obtains a dispensation) all day under the devouring sun without a drop of water. It is not forbidden, however, to rinse the mouth, which is a great relief, and practised at other times than during Ramadan, as continual drinking is impossible.

The Prophet, in instituting this fast, prescribed that the believer should wait after sunset until he could "no longer distinguish a white thread from a red thread" before satisfying his cravings. This prohibition is not followed to the letter, for when the sun has disappeared below the horizon, the French gun is fired. At this signal, so impatiently anticipated, hundreds of cigarettes in the crowded streets seem to have been lighted by the blaze of the cannon. Other devotees, anxious to absorb something more substantial, hold their bowl of soup, or sit over a dish of kouskous, into which each plunges, at the welcome sound of the cannon, with his spoon, a piece of bread, or his fingers.

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At the end of June, as the sun was lingering on the highest

terraces and gilding the old Kasbah, we left Alger la Blanche, now in the shadow of Bouzareah, with a heavy heart, and as we swung around the end of the long jetty the *White Dove* soon became the diamond set in its emerald frame.

My reader must know that the poetry-loving people to whom we have paid a visit use flattery, and delight in high-flown expressions; in giving, therefore, the following translation of a characteristic letter which I received after my return, from Fatma, Baïa's mother, I must not be accused of want of modesty for not having omitted certain laudatory phrases in which she indulges, very much to my credit:

"ALGIERS, the 16th of the moon of Djeleb.

"To the very eminent painter, Mr. B——: May Allah accord to him his protection and mercy, as also to his madame. Hail!

"Praises to the Lord! As soon as I received your letter, I made haset to go on your errand to Ain Kalah; but I found his two shops and his house closed with strings and wax, and the seal of the cadi-bach upon them. His wives have returned, each one to her father's home. The unhappy Ain Kalah is behind the grating of the prison, where, I have in my mind, he will stay a long while, if Allah with his powerful hand does not let him out. He sold a farm (*haouch*) which did not belong to him, by means of false witnesses and through wives that were not his own. I was told that I might speak to him in his prison, with a permission from l'Oukil-el-Rey (*Juge d'Instruction*). I cannot do that. Besides, in his unfortunate position, I do not believe that he is willing to go to the expense of the silk kerchief in exchange for the baggage you left in his hands before leaving Algiers.

"Whenever it will give you pleasure to return to Algiers, you will always find in my poor home a little corner for your pictures and brushes.

"My salutations to your madame; kiss for me Baïa and Zouhr, your little children. May Allah protect them with his benedictions, and make them grow in strength and wisdom under the shadow of your eminent virtues.

"Salutations and health. FATMA."

CHAPTER XXV.

INTO KABYLIA.

LET the reader now turn back the pages of fifteen years and follow me in journeys through other scenes, by diligence, several hundred miles from Algiers. At the present time some of these trips can be made by rail, but I prefer my former experience, now that the hardships are over; and they were hardships, for they almost cost me my life. For that very reason, however, my impressions have remained stronger than they would have done had I gone over the same ground more rapidly and comfortably.

We had spent a delightful winter, and had been fortunate enough to occupy as a studio a whole villa at Mustapha, which, with its extensive grounds and gardens, had been placed at our entire disposal. At the end of our stay, however, it passed out of the hands of the French owner into those of a wealthy young Arab, who came, accompanied by two of his six young wives, to visit the premises, evidently with the desire to consult and please the fancy of his favorite *houri's* before making the purchase.

At five o'clock in the morning of April 5, 1873, I took my place on the upper bench of the diligence behind and above the driver. My companion, an Englishman, who was an old traveller in India, sat beside me. In the plain of the Metidja the mist lay in long white bands away over to the foot of the blue hills of the Atlas, and the sun, rising from a pale lemon-yellow

sky, dispersed the fleecy veil, and revealed long dusty roads, crowded at times with Arabs, camels, and donkeys—they all seemed of one family and of one kind, in the uniform shroud of dust—going to market.

The horrors of the insurrection of 1871 were brought vividly before the imagination when the driver, who had escaped

LITTLE GARDEN, ALGIERS.

many dangers in his capacity of mail-carrier, pointed to the desolate and charred ruins of houses and blackened trees and rocks. He gave long and detailed accounts of the treachery of the Arabs when they availed themselves of *L'Année terrible*

to show their hostility to the conquerors of their country, who had withdrawn their forces for the struggle with Germany. The perfidy and cruelty of the natives remind one forcibly of what the Puritans and the early settlers westward-bound in the United States had to endure in their battles for territory against the treacherous Indians. Our driver told his reminiscences with as much zest as if the war and Commune had just finished, whereas we were in '73, and he must have narrated the same terrible incidents to fresh relays of travellers some hundreds of times.

The magnificent peaks of the Djurdjura, clothed in their heavy mantle of snow during nine months of the year, were always "so near and yet so far;" a splendid morsel of Switzerland transplanted to the borders of the Sahara, the melting snows to quench the thirst of the lion, the panther, and wildcat, and finally to be swallowed up in sandy plains below, and to disappear among pebbles and the roots of the oleander in the lowest channels of the river-beds. As we passed through the gorge of Palaestro everything was shut out from our sight save the tempestuous river Isser rushing through, and the precipice of grayish-white rock on either side. The gorge had once been, apparently, the bottomless pit of a glacier, which ages ago had polished and marked the massive walls of stone in long streaks. Echoes of our ponderous vehicle, of the snorting of the horses and of the clicking of their feet and harness, of the cracking whip, and of the leaping waters, thundered about us in and out of tunnels until we reached the genial sunlight again, and the cornfields and flowers, of which we had had brilliant glimpses, gracefully nodding to us from the heights above. I am writing these souvenirs very much in the manner that the corn and flowers are bent by the breezes, jotting down my impressions as I receive them, and recalling incidents and

places along the road without binding them together more closely than memory has connected them. Whether before or after Palaestro I do not remember, we branched off from the high-road to Constantine, for which city we were bound, and ascended gradually by another route to Fort Napoleon, now Fort National. By this time we had reached Kabylia, the most thickly populated part of all Algeria. The grandeur of the scenery and its immense proportions are not equalled elsewhere in the country. The Fort, a white speck high up on the mountain-side, and the whitewashed minarets of the mosques, shone in the clear atmosphere of three thousand feet above the sea, against the great masses of olive-trees in the dense, broad shadows of the precipitous rock looming above and capped with glistening snow. Oh! for an alpenstock, and a slide of a thousand feet, and a roll in the pure snow to clear away the dust and stickiness, and to unrust one's joints and brace the small-of-the-back!

Tamgout Lalla Khadidja, the peak of the Lady Khadidja, five thousand feet still higher than the Fort, is the highest of the range, and quite inaccessible when covered with snow, we were told, but can be crossed in summer without much difficulty even by laden mules. I could not resist the temptation of preserving a souvenir of these magnificent peaks, and still more of making a useful study; and the next day I had all my sketching apparatus ready, and sat on the mountain-side opposite my subject and in the sun, for the chilly breezes in the shade were uncomfortably cold. But there I found my enemy. At the end of an hour such a stupor came over me that I fell asleep then and there, feeling sure that Nature must have her own way in demanding more rest after the trying journey; and I would not believe that there was any danger of sunstroke at that elevation, but I made a mistake, and almost a fatal one.

In about twenty minutes I experienced such horrible sensations of being riveted to the earth by a rusty iron bar through my hips that I began to be frightened, and gathered myself together as best I could, but it was hard work, and after a superhuman effort I dragged myself back to the hotel, where I became insensible for a time. Fever had a good hold upon me, and I experienced the usual symptoms—the sensation of having been beaten with a cudgel on the nape of the neck. My good friend, who had seen many similar instances in India, and had been carried, insensible from sunstroke, on board a steamer bound for England, ministered to me with much care and devotion. Fortunately, a lady traveller had a small bottle of *Eau sédative*, which gave me great relief while waiting for a doctor. Our inn, not desirable at best, became a most doleful abode under the circumstances. There was a billiard-table, over which the uneven and chipped balls rumbled like a distant thunder-storm, or at any rate as good an imitation of a thunder-storm as that rendered in a provincial theatre behind the scenes. The table was a paying institution, however, for it was patronized all day long. I should be afraid to say how near the balls came to each other at times.

We were surrounded by the immense walls of the fortifications, which were still being repaired by the very hands that attempted to destroy them during the insurrection. They were built by the Turks as a stronghold (probably by the Romans originally). The Roman paved paths in these regions are steep and direct; the modern French roads cross them frequently in more gradual ascent. (From the Fort to Tizi-Ouzou, a distance of seventeen miles, a splendid macadamized highway was completed in seventeen days by thirty thousand soldiers.) The villages are built on the crests of the hills, which run out in promontories from the greater elevations, and are sometimes only wide

enough to allow of two rows of houses with a single street between them. The positions are well chosen for defence. In time of war, shelter and protection are sought in the mosques, not only because there people are under the cloak of the Prophet, but also because the holy sanctuary is the largest building in the place and is used as a citadel.

The Kabyles are very frugal and industrious, but the filth of their habitations can compare triumphantly with that of all others most refined in uncleanliness in our universe. The houses are built of mud and stones, with red-tiled roofs, nearly flat, and always black at one corner, for trouble is never taken to build a chimney; the smoke escapes through a hole and under the eaves. Here again, as in Algiers (in which latter city there is no excuse), the doors are several inches too low, and any one who has seen the age of fourteen may never hope to enter in an upright position. There is only one door, and there are no windows. The human portion of the family occupies one end of the hut, while the animal members of the same—cows, pigs, donkeys—are walled off at the other end. An open space above allows ample exchange of foul and pungent odors and the escape of the stinging and stifling smoke. Not only are all these living creatures shut up in this stench, but the accumulation of foulness around the houses, from generation to generation, is still worse. The nomadic tribes at least air their tents and change their spot several times a year.

Remarkable stories are told of the temerity and dexterity of Arab thieves, who can creep near houses and tents without awakening the slumbering inhabitants or the vigilant and ferocious dog. It is said that the Kabyles are very jealous of their wives, and, moreover, that their fears on that score do not lack foundation. In the first place, the women do not wear veils, and their mode of living must allow them considerable freedom. They

are always going somewhere—to the fountain for water, or to wash their clothes at the trough near by, or to the fields to work—and their admirers, hidden among the branches of a thick olive-tree or behind the broad-leaved cactus, whisper their love as well as their threats to the fair ones as they pass by.

AT THE FOUNTAIN OF BIRKADEM, BETWEEN ALGIERS AND BLIDAH.

The Djamaa, a large square building furnished with stone benches, is an institution which corresponds with our clubs. The Arabs congregate and lounge about there to discuss all sorts of topics—politics, scandals, and general local news.

The distance from the Fort to a most picturesque village proved very deceptive, as in Switzerland, owing to the grand

proportion of the landscape before us. Nearly an hour was passed in accomplishing what we thought would take twenty minutes. A tortuous and rugged path led along the backbone of the hill, rocky and overgrown with cacti and brier at the top and alongside the steeper paths that led down to the bottom of the ravines on either hand; and every available nook and corner on its slopes was cultivated to the utmost, as throughout all Kabylia.

The yellow wheat growing in irregular patches among the malachite cacti, enlivened with red and cadmium-yellow fruit, in sunlight and in shadow of the small-leafed olive, so sensitive to the slightest breeze, showing its dark upper and its paler green sides, the great trunk hundreds of years old, its tortuous roots worn smooth by cattle lying against them, by children climbing over them, or by the laborer resting in the heat of the day; then the more distant foliage, dull dark-green masses, through which shot broad sheets of the sun's rays, and back of all the blue rocks and snow towering above—all formed a glorious picture, of the scenic kind, however, which had a character of its own distinct from that of landscapes of other countries. An eagle threw his shadow across the red-tiled roofs and wheat-fields as he soared above our heads, the sun glowing through his wings out-stretched and motionless. Swallows, darting to their nests through the doors of the houses and mosque, twittered in lively concert, and took counsel as to whether they should soon return to their homes in France or remain till the end of May. I overheard one of them say, "Ali ben Baba has attached this red thread to my leg, and I am bound to return next winter, to prove that I am faithful to my little nest just above his door, and where I can look into his stable; and I can always get out, if the door is shut, through a little hole which I know under the cave yonder near the corner, where the kettle

hangs over the blackened stones and heap of gray ashes. I have often heard it said there's no place like home; and notwithstanding my fright at being captured, and having this tiny thread and red flannel tied to my leg, to distinguish me from my black-and-white brethren whom I so much resemble, I shall prove, as others have done before me, that I believe in the saying and am of the same opinion."

The origin of the term Zouave comes from this part of the country, and the reader may be interested in its derivation. The great tribe of Zouaoua is the most warlike in Kabylia, and occupies a large tract of mountainous country not far from that portion which we visited. My regrettable accident prevented us from making the interesting excursion into their district, although one day would have sufficed. The native militia in the service of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were called Zouaoua, as at first none but members of this warlike tribe of Kabyles were enrolled. Subsequently their ranks were opened to all Kabyles and Arabs indiscriminately, and the French adopted a corrupted form of the word Zouaoua (Zouave) for their celebrated African regiments.

In regard to landscapes on a large scale, may I be allowed to say a few words outside of our direct subject? I am not the only artist who has been asked why a scene that is magnificent in nature is not the finest subject for a picture. This question often arises, especially in Switzerland. But it would require too much space here to discuss the subject satisfactorily, for it is not an easy one to exhaust in a few lines. The result of such a discussion generally brings the inevitable observation from those not convinced, "Well, I dare say you are right, but I cannot see why this scene or that panorama would not be superb on canvas."

In the first place, there's the difficulty of choosing the subject. The many planes of Swiss landscape — foreground, middle-distance, distance, and I may say extra-distance in the form of a snow-covered range, are separated by valleys of ten, twenty, forty miles, and do not harmonize with each other, but remain in separate masses, rising one above the other, like scenery on the stage. And then we come to the everlasting question of simplicity. There's too much in a grand landscape unless there be a unity of tone, of light and shadow and line, which brings the whole together as a whole, just as an immense crowd can be treated as a mass, or one person, so to speak, subservient to the principal figure or few figures. Is there anything more hideous than a photographic group of a large number of people where all are prominent and obtrusive, especially when intended for portraits, one range above another? And yet we have reason to believe that groups of friends will always be in favor, with painted backgrounds and stippled faces, and that panoramic views will continue to share the same appreciation of many.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TO AND FROM TUNIS.

ON returning to Tizi-Ouzou—for I believe that was our branching-off place, to which we had to retrace our steps of fifty-four miles, in order to continue our journey—the important question arose as to whether to go on to Constantine, or return the much shorter distance, sixty-five miles, to Algiers; the longer trip won the toss. All I remember of the Portes de Fer is that towards evening we were transferred from the large diligence to a small four-wheeler with only four places in the interior and one by the side of the driver. The driver was a sad specimen of humanity, who began the journey tipsy and continued in that state. My friend and I were sole possessors of the interior of the light, frail vehicle. It was furnished with flapping curtains of black oil-cloth, which we buckled down at night. Our Automedon, after numerous vile cocktails at every relay on the road, treating his brethren and being treated, should not have been trusted with four young mules to drive on newly-made roads and on the edges of precipices; but throughout Algeria these reckless drivers have a custom of stopping to drink, at dead of night, while the passengers are supposed to be asleep; they then make up lost time by furious spurts, during which those intrusted to their tender care are awakened and justly grumble. What is to be done? Inspectors cannot always watch them.

At the end of a day already tedious enough we were nearing the Portes de Fer, along a road which had been covered with a thick layer of newly-broken stones. The two unruly mules ahead broke loose from their traces, and finding nothing to drag except the driver, who braced himself with his heels against the dash-board, made their own time for the remaining half-mile which lay between us and our dinner at the foot of the hill. Here we stopped as short a length of time as possible, and prepared for the night's journey over many miles of rough ground, through muddy holes, deep ruts, and sand and stones. There was no definite road, and the many vehicles which had passed over the broad plain had left their wheel-marks wherever they best avoided the little hillocks and tufts of grass. There were glistening streaks, a good span wide, where on a steep slope the big flat slab of iron, fastened by a chain under the heavy transport wagons in front of the hind-wheels, to serve as a brake, had flattened and polished the earth. As our poor bones rattled along the route the Arabs' dogs in the neighboring douars howled mournfully, and when within reasonable distance they made furious dashes at us, then, tired of the charge, whirled round and returned to sleep until daylight. Between two and three o'clock in the morning, when the fumes of the cocktails had forsaken his troubled brain, our driver pointed to a great square rock jutting out from the hills —which stood with jagged edges, a deep blue-gray mass in sharp silhouette against the first streaks of dawn—as the favorite spot, a kind of observatory, of a wily old lion who was to be seen frequently at this hour, but whose movements were either somewhat difficult to follow, or else enterprise in hunting him was lacking.

We did not travel continuously, but waited over at different places. The following night we passed in a new French settle-

ment—square one-story buildings, with enclosures and shelter for camels, horses, and donkeys, all mixed up with an apparently inextricable jumble of harness, trapping, saddles, and merchandise. The sleeping-room allotted to us was between two other rooms, with a single way of communication, unless one chose to enter from the street or stable through the windows; so that the rooms might about as well have been all in one. Half a dozen women of a nomad tribe accommodated themselves in the apartment beyond us. One of them, in passing through our room, nodded and mumbled a few words in Arabic, interlarded with "Bon, mossou fait rien, bon soir." As I had not enjoyed more than an hour's uninterrupted sleep for several nights, I returned the salute in a worse mood when they rattled through the creaking doors at five o'clock the next morning. There still remained a wainscoting of dust on their heavy woollen drapery, which trailed on the ground, ragged and gray at the lower edge, the dust allowing the dark blue, the original color of the stuff, to appear by gradations at the knees. Their shins and feet seemed as if they belonged to creatures of the rhinoceros tribe, and they wore heavy jingling jewellery and immense head-gear, which was too complicated to remove for the sake of a night's rest.

Our next station of interest was Setif, where we were obliged to stay a day and night. A doctor attended me, and ordered a hot bath, and towels wet with cold water wrapped round my head. His method of treatment may have saved many, but I thought that this bath was to be my last; and, notwithstanding the prescription, I soon jumped out, for my blood was boiling, and went thumping to my head as if forced by a steam-pump.

My remembrance of Setif, therefore, is not very vivid, but the interest in the place can be exhausted in a few hours at

most when one has grasped the idea, which it does not take long to do, of walking over the site of one of the most extensive cities of the Romans in this section of country. Traces remained of their fortifications, which were made use of in the construction of large modern walls; for it is a strong military station at present, and quite modern French. Mournful avenues of large trees sheltering stone benches, cafés frequented by officers, and a few broken Roman statues, capitals, and columns, seemed to be all the objects of interest offered to the traveller, so that we were glad to leave this flat (morally and topographically) country for Constantine, which was indeed worth seeing. But as the reader is to follow us on our trip from that city to Biskra, we will continue to Tunis and Bona in our narrative.

On a plain at the end of a bay, and almost level with the sea, Tunis lies, flattened out in low buildings, for the most part, of one story; steamers stop at the entrance of the Behira, a very shallow bay, only a few feet deep, and passengers are transferred to small boats. To the left, an aqueduct of reddish stone, reminding one somewhat of the Campagna, runs back towards the blue hills; to the right, a promontory which requires the liveliest imagination to accept as the site of Carthage. The souvenirs of all the Turners, Claude Lorraines, and Salvator Rosas could not help us out in reconstructing the great city. Our curiosity, as is the case with every stranger after securing his room at the hotel, first led us to visit Carthage, several miles by carriage, through sparse olive-trees, planted with regularity, which were in charming contrast to the red earth and deep blue sea. We passed several porphyry columns which had lain at the water's edge for how long it is difficult to say. In a museum at the top of the hill a few disappointing fragments have been collected. The really interesting ruins were several cisterns, still

in a remarkable state of preservation and of immense dimensions, vaulted and divided into compartments; the cement of the walls was still smooth, but the cisterns no longer retain the rain-water which they were built to receive. It is supposed that the streets and ground around them had been paved with marble, in order to conduct into them all the rain that fell. Now Arabs and their flocks take up their residence there.

As might be well supposed, Tunis, with its palace of the Bey within the city, and the summer palace at some distance, is almost entirely constructed with white marble columns and slabs and stone blocks taken from the palace of Dido and from the Forum, luxurious baths and grand temples of mighty Carthage. If the site was so well chosen by her founders, and the famous city had flourished for so many hundreds of years, how astonishing it seems that she should so entirely disappear, and that her building material should be transported elsewhere! After a glimpse of the little chapel erected to the memory of St. Louis, who died in 1270, on his return from the Crusades, we drove back and lounged round the bazaars, seeking what we might devour in the way of stuffs and costumes for the studio. There is an indescribable charm in these Eastern bazaars: the odors of musk (for those who like it), of tobacco, orange-blossoms, ottar of roses—the oily extract sold in long phials of thick glass with gold designs upon them—and other perfumes difficult for the nose to analyze in their conflict with each other. I was particularly struck with the exceedingly delicate tones and shades of the silks and velvets of the costumes and draperies in the shops as well as those worn by the people, even in their woollen and cloth burnooses and jackets. Nothing so perfect of the kind is to be found elsewhere, not even in the delicate colors in vogue on our continents. The transparency, too, of their fabrics is incredible; cobweb is the only texture to which it can

JEWISH SILVER-SMITH, ALGIERS.

be compared. Aside from the charm for the eye and for the nasal organs, so frequently offended in other quarters, there is in these covered bazaars a delicious repose from the noise, dust, and glare outside. The Jewish tailors, who have a charmingly picturesque row of workshops to themselves, like those who carry on trades of every description, arrange themselves in direct competition one against the other. This is

most convenient for the buyer, who can choose by comparison and without wasting his time and patience in going all over the town. We made some good bargains with the auctioneers, who went backward and forward from one end to the other of the busy corners and narrow covered streets crying their last bids. The most gratifying part of the purchase was the use of our Arabic vocabulary, the financial department of which was mostly confined to the unmistakable digits. The costume of the men differs but little from that usual in Algiers. The Jews are prohibited from wearing the colors of the Prophet—green and white. The former is reserved for the scherifs, or descendants of Mohammed, while the latter is appropriated to the use of the simple Mussulmans. The Jews, therefore, restrict their head-dress to the red tarboosh, with blue tassel wound round with black, or some other than the sacred colors. The most striking departure from other costumes described in this work, and one which is noticed and remembered by every visitor to Tunis, is the peculiar cut of the dresses of the Jewesses, which remains the same, no matter what exquisite shade of silk is employed, or what ingenuity of design in the intricate embroidery, or what variety of stripes in the knitted and lower part of the pantaloons. From the feet up above the knees these garments are quite tight, as the knitted portion is of course elastic. The wearers walk in a somewhat constrained manner, toes turned in, and rather flat-footed, like the Arab women. I think, too, that by this time, from frequent intercourse with European ladies who visit them, they seem conscious of being perplexed as to how to answer the question, "Why do you wear those things?" Not even with the corpulent is any of the grace of this attire lost. Corpulence, indeed, is considered a requisite for beauty, and is naturally cultivated, in emulation of certain central African tribes, among

whom feminine perfection consists in a state of obesity which necessitates creeping on all fours. The haïk, embroidered jacket, gauze chemises with gold trimmings, and jewellery compensate in a measure for the poor Jewesses' shortcomings.

The Arab women here wear a long black veil, tied across the nose and just under the eyes, which, like the Cairo veil, gives a funereal appearance. This veil differs from that worn by Algerian women, which is white, and in the form of a handkerchief folded cornerwise.

The Bardo, summer residence of the Bey, resembling a fort rather than a palace, with its austere moat and walls flanked by towers and bastions, is gorgeous in the interior, in the hall of justice and state saloon, with white marble, pictures, gilding, satin and brocade, hangings and furniture. The state saloon has high windows, between which are life-size portraits. The decorations are not so shocking to good taste as those of so many other palaces inhabited by Eastern dignitaries. The city residence, for instance, and similar palaces in Egypt and Morocco, are examples of that horrible mixture of modern furniture—red damask chairs, blue hangings, white and washed-out Aubusson carpets, inlaid tables, and other atrocities—with objects purely Oriental, within constructions exquisitely designed, and ornamented with tiles and arabesques. After leaving the hall of justice, "where," in the words of Sir L. Playfair, "periodically his Highness in person administers the patriarchal but substantially equitable justice which seems far better suited to semi-civilized people than the more elaborate jurisprudence of Europe," we paid a long visit to the janitor, executioner, and great Mogul, who received us cordially in his neat little lodge at the well-guarded entrance. He wore on his head an immense red tarboosh, or fez, much broader at the top than, and of a different shape from, the one with which the reader is proba-

bly familiar. Throwing back his large sleeves, he took down from the wall, in a very slow and deliberate way, several choice cimeters, his cherished companions for thirty years. "This heavy curved cimeter I have used on many occasions," he said, huskily, "and it is a good one, and does its work well; but when I do not feel quite so sure of myself I always use this one;" and he took down from its nail still another old friend, very thin and slender from frequent sharpening, and very much curved. He handled it, and felt its edge with apparent pride.

"And how many heads have you chopped off in one day?" we asked.

"Oh, as many as thirty," he answered, as complacently as if it had been a question as to his preference of snuff to a pipe. "And with practice, when my hand loses its precision for want of necks, I can with this thin weapon cut out a five franc silver piece from between two blocks of wood without disturbing the position of the blocks."

"Then we will remain friends with you, Ali Ben—whatever-your-other-name-is;" and our hands went to our pockets instinctively in search of coin, and we left Ali to his future black deeds, and—it must be acknowledged—with a certain wicked feeling of regret that we could not witness his dexterity.

We were told by our guide that criminals who were known to have wealthy relatives or friends fared much better than the poorer wretches who were doomed for slaughter. "Faring better" is a doubtful consolation when it comes to having one's head cut off. When the executioner pockets a handsome remuneration he begins the fulfilment of his dark duties by executing the culprit who has paid to have his head taken off neatly and with one stroke while the arm is fresh, and the eye as well as the sword keen, whereas the thirtieth man who

kneels with his arms tied behind his back, on the marble pavement in the hot sun, awaiting his turn, frequently has his agony prolonged by having more than one ill-aimed whack made at his neck by the hard-hearted or careless executioner. But none are so poor among the slain that they have not some one sufficiently interested in their future welfare to ask for the head and body, that the neck may be joined in the same grave, to wait the resurrection, when it is important to have the right head on the right man. It can be readily understood, therefore, why the Arabs would prefer to die by some other means than execution by the sword or guillotine.

ENTRANCE TO A HOUSE.

One of the other keepers of the Bardo then showed us other parts of the palace and grounds with more pleasant associations, especially the grove of orange-trees, the branches of which were thickly laden, and hung so low that we could choose the best without having the trouble of lifting our heads. We were not, of course, fortunate enough to meet any of the *houris* of the well-supplied harem, but the eyes of many were doubtless following every step we made, whether through the garden or across the white marble pavement of the great court, into which they could peer from their concealed apartments, whence, too, they were perhaps allowed

to witness more exciting spectacles—the carrying out of justice, for example.

There are various reasons given for the custom of painting a red hand on the wall near the door-ways in the street; Some say that it is "merely for ornament;" others that it is a sign of good-fellowship—offering the hand to the passers-by; whereas in Tunis a dramatic significance is given to its use in a dangerous quarter of that city, where it is believed that the fingers point continually towards the eyes of any one who intends mischief, and that they would blind the eyes of the assassin. The simple method resorted to for painting the mark is to smear the hand with the color and press it against the wall.

As Christians are rigorously excluded from the mosques in the province of Tunis, little can be said about their interiors. We shall give but a passing glance at Bona, which is interesting from a historical point of view—it was the Hippo over which St. Augustine held rule as bishop—but not particularly so as regards picturesque life. Like Carthage, it was within easy reach of the Romans.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FROM BONA TO CONSTANTINE.

WHEN we had taken possession of our rooms at the hotel, upon our arrival at Bona, our attention was attracted to a group of Arabs on the large open Place d'Armes, which lay opposite our windows and was planted with trees. In front of the Arab butcher's shop, next to a café, two lions, recently killed in the vicinity, had just been skinned, and their hides, still warm, were being cleansed and scraped. Unfortunately their carcasses had been cut up, else it would have been a rare opportunity of studying the anatomy. Since the French occupation of Algeria, lions, and other ferocious beasts, have almost disappeared. The country around Bona is still the wooded and hilly district where most lions are seen and hunted.

At Philippeville, a sea-coast city in direct line from Marseilles to Constantine, we found ourselves at five o'clock one morning trying to kill an hour before the departure of the train for Constantine. It was too dark to see anything. The uninteresting town had all its doors and blinds closed, and the shops their shutters; even the hard and dirty benches of the railway-station were not at our disposal at that early hour; the only signs of life being in the locomotive getting up steam, and in a few busy Arabs of the port unloading vessels, while still others were pestering us with their demands for more *pourboire* for

the services they had rendered us, not only in landing our trunks and handbags, but in doing all they could to dismember and dissect us in their endeavors to get hold of them beforehand. The silence of the port was otherwise undisturbed. Neither were the lions awake—those belonging to Monsieur L——, a wealthy gentleman of Philippeville, who, we were told, had constructed an immense cage, enclosing earth, trees, and rocks, where the lions could disport themselves at comparative ease.

After waiting for some time we joined a straggling gang of sailors and early market people who were going to mass at the cathedral. There we spent a good half-hour, and came out to find broad daylight; then we heard the welcome sound of the locomotive's whistle, and were off through green trees and across deep river-beds overhung with twisted roots and willows and olive-trees. Sunshine and singing-birds made us forget our misery of the night at sea. Soon we left the level ground and refreshing verdure, and began to climb laboriously, for within four hours we were to ascend to Constantine, 2093 feet above the sea. The road is a marvel of engineering, but the ascent is monotonous; one can get out and walk, keeping pace with the train, and throw stones on the winding and zigzag track below. Puffing, spitting, and struggling, our fatigued engine, at one steep grade, could go no farther, but with a whistle for the brakes and a friendly call on a few dozen soldiers and other travellers, we helped her out of her dilemma, and at a less steep incline we all jumped aboard and did our share of puffing and steaming. At about ten o'clock, under the shade of cliffs, in the pure, heavenly atmosphere of the elevation, we glided into the station of Constantine. See Rome, see Naples, but do not die until you have seen Constantine.

I believe that artists possess one faculty more developed than do other mortals—that of forming a tolerably accurate

idea of places before seeing them, and of not being deceived or disappointed, at least in regard to local color, to distances, and to the heights of mountains, accustomed as they are to painting from nature and to making allowances for errors of interpretation in pictures, and distortions in photographs, of places and scenes. Niagara, Venice, Naples, for instance, I found very much what I expected, discarding the bright emerald-green and eternal rainbow of Niagara, and the conventional, fiery representations of the two cities, and accepting even some of the grayest aspects of the places, as more generally true than the exaggerated and brilliant ones.*

This is somewhat a digression from the subject, but my object, on the one hand, is to present the realistic side of Constantine, and, on the other, to take the city as an example of grandeur of dimensions and situation, from the ideal, picturesque, and romantic point of view. Contemplating the city from still greater elevations, and from a distance, by early morning, in the evening, and by moonlight, when all things become more

* In spite of the truth, it is a popular error with a vast number of people who have never seen the Italian cities to be influenced by gaudy representations to the extent of believing that the natural aspect of the cities is that of perpetual after-glow; that everything swims in a haze of gold and heat. As for Africa! the name itself suggests to them a brazen furnace; and in order to express the feeling of heat in the atmosphere it is thought necessary to paint everything yellow. Now, the color of the sky and of sunlight generally has nothing to do with temperature. In the middle of winter, when the thermometer stood at ten degrees below zero, I have seen over New York bay a sunset sky that suggested the heat of Lower Egypt in May, and which was exactly the same as a sunset sky in that country. On the other hand, see Spain; go to the high plateau of Madrid, where the air is clear. The sun may be hottest when the sky is of a cold deep blue, and the blank white houses and trees are cut out against it with scarcely a suggestion of yellow in them, but blinking under an intense glare like that of the chilly and uncongenial electric light.

ideal and poetic, Constantine can hardly be surpassed. Now look on the reverse of the medal. Enter within her gates and see the commonplace modern structures that, seen from without, assumed the aspect of palaces, of grand fortifications, with turrets and bastions springing apparently from the solid rock, and growing from foundations intended for them by nature; go to the edges of the frightful precipice among tanneries, stables, filthy habitations; descend into the impenetrable abyss through stenches arising from the accumulation, from century upon century, of offal from the slaughter-house, dead bodies of animals, fed upon by vultures, and you will see what I mean by realism. The Roumel, in times of siege, has run through a charnel-house indescribable, and even a few years since could have revealed blood-curdling mysteries. We were tempted to follow the ravine and the impetuous river, but the first step of our expedition was enough to prove it quite impossible. We found ourselves in a narrow part of the gorge, scarcely fifteen feet wide, near a bridge, under the rock called Sidi Rached, on which stand the ruins of a fine Roman tower. This is said to have been the Tarpeian Rock of the old Turkish rulers of Constantine, from which they threw faithless or suspected wives into the torrent five hundred feet below. Over this cliff upwards of three hundred of the inhabitants let themselves down by ropes to escape the French when they took possession of Constantine, and most of them perished miserably.*

* "Nature seems to have constructed Constantine entirely with a view to defence and picturesque effect. It occupies the summit of a plateau of rock, nearly quadrilateral in shape, the faces corresponding to the cardinal points, and its surface sloping from north to south. Its sides rise perpendicularly nearly one thousand feet from the bed of the river Roumel, which surrounds it on the north and east, and it is connected on the west side only, by an

The old town containing the Jewish and Arab quarters remains quite distinct, and its streets are as curious as those of Algiers, although, unfortunately for the artist, at least, it has become very much circumscribed by the encroaching French buildings, which threaten soon to replace the picturesque element and wipe it out forever by new broad boulevards and squares, gravel-walks, trees, and hideous barracks.

No open objection was made to our entering the courts of Jewish houses, although we suspected that our presence was not always agreeable, and were now and then convinced of it by seeing young boys who passed near us spit on the ground to show their contempt of us as Christians.

Certain classes of material for wearing apparel in Constantine, as in North Africa generally—calicoes, Indian prints in vivid colors and extravagant designs, silks and satins, laces, gauzes with spangles sewn on, and gold ornamentation woven in—are especially made in France and England for this market; nevertheless, as they are not to be seen elsewhere, they look characteristic and in keeping with the Arab costumes. One often sees in the shops and streets old men, wearing big spectacles like bull's-eye lanterns, engaged, like the soldiers in the barracks, in knitting socks. The chief articles of Arab manufacture are leather goods, shoes, saddles, harness, and men's costumes, all of which the Arab workmen and the Jewish tailors embroider most beautifully and substantially. The making of these articles, and especially the weaving of haïks and burnooses

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isthmus, with the main-land. The deep ravine, through which the Roumel flows, varies in breadth from about two hundred feet on the south-east side to nearly double that distance opposite the Kasbah; and is spanned on the north-east by four natural arches of rock, about two hundred feet above the stream, one of which serves as the foundation for the bridge of El-Kantara."—Sir L. Playfair.

in enormous numbers, constitute the principal industries of Constantine. The city also exports wool and cereals.

We found the weather uncomfortably cold, and experienced the same drawback to sketching out-of-doors on our return in May. During my stay I could hardly rid my mind of the disagreeable sensation of hanging over a bottomless pit—an abyss of a thousand feet might as well be without bottom practically —or of an irresistible desire to jump over the precipice. I envied the eagles their power of flying and peering into inaccessible recesses, and watched them as they swirled half-way down the abyss, showing their dark backs instead of their light-colored breasts that we are accustomed to see when they soar above our heads. My apprehensions in regard to going over the precipice were sharpened by a disagreeable adventure one dark night soon after my arrival. I left my companion at a café one evening after dinner and strolled through the well-lighted principal street and line of shops into an almost forsaken quarter of the town through the Arab meat-market and a row of blacksmiths' shops. I then directed my steps down a dark alley-way, where a few miserable shops and dwellings were dimly lighted with oil-lamps and flickering, sputtering tapers; I had passed the last gas street-lamp when, suddenly, all was black and blank before me. I stumbled against a pile of rubbish that had been emptied on the very edge of the fearful precipice, and the stones and straw that I had loosened with my foot went rattling down the perpendicular walls of rock. I instinctively threw myself backward and caught hold of some planks to my right, which formed a rudely made fence round a few feet of ground which served as a stable-yard. A donkey was standing near, and almost leaning against one poor rotten plank which separated him from perdition; one step, only one, and he could easily have broken the barrier or slipped under

it, and said forever farewell to his labors. One step more and I might have done the same. I can still hear the dull and distant rushing of the Roumel from the regions below, and the squawking jackdaws wakened by the falling débris.

A certain drunkard had become famous here—from no exertion on his part, but probably from lack of it—a few years previous. "What fate?" you will ask. "Fell over and was dashed to pieces?" Not at all. Fell over, yes; but dashed to pieces, not a bit of it. He lived to imbibe to his heart's content. Reeling home from the outskirts, and on the opposite side of the city, he rolled too near the edge of what would have been the deep grave of any respectable and sober mortal, and over he went; but at that part of the ravine where it opens out above the falls of the Roumel the rock and earth for two or three hundred feet slope back at a slight incline, and there are huge cacti growing all the way down to a natural bridge which is covered with grass. Down our hero went, tearing and being torn, and bumping on the tufts and shrubs until he landed, safe but not very sound, on the bridge below. He was recovered, but was of course badly bruised and scratched, and—history does not state, but I should be inclined to think—sober.

To describe the principal object of architectural interest in Constantine I cannot do better than use the words of Sir L. Playfair:

"The Palace of Constantine is one of the most interesting buildings in the country; it is by no means venerable in point of age, being the work of El-Hadj Ahmed, the last Bey, but it is an excellent type of Moorish architecture, and it is constructed out of materials of a much older date.

"At the farther end of the Place du Palais is seen a heavy and inelegant mass of masonry, the appearance of which is by no means improved by being pierced with several modern doors and windows, but on passing the principal entrance this impression is instantly dispelled. It is impossible to conceive anything more brilliant than the interior, and the visitor is lost in astonishment

at the endless galleries which surround its exquisite gardens, the whole combining effects of perspective, light, shade, and color, which it is impossible to describe.

"The site of the present palace used to be a mass of filthy lanes and crumbling houses. In 1826 El-Hadj Ahmed was named Bey, and he immediately conceived the idea of building a palace worthy of the rulers of Constantine. He commenced, by fair means or foul, to obtain possession of the ground necessary for his purpose.

"A Genoese of the name of Schiaffino, engaged in the exportation of grain at Bona, was charged to procure from Italy the marble necessary for the work, which was laboriously brought, ready sculptured, on mules from the coast. Complaints of the Bey's extortion to the Dey of Algiers caused the work to be suspended for a time; but in 1830, becoming, by the fall of the Dey, absolute master of the province, he resumed it with renewed vigor. He collected his workmen; without the least scruple he commenced to demolish the houses which stood in his way; all the principal mansions of Constantine were despoiled of their choicest works of art—old encaustic tiles, marble columns, carved wood-work; the summer palace of Salah Bey was entirely destroyed in this manner. And so the palace, which under ordinary circumstances would have been the work of generations, rose as if by enchantment in the short space of six years."

The extensive colonnades of marble columns which entirely surround the several gardens in squares are partitioned off in places by screens of *mousharabieh* and intricate carved open wood-work which still remain, and which were intended to seclude the women of the harem. What pictures of ease and luxury one can imagine; of beautiful young women, lounging and dozing on divans, watching the birds in the gardens luxuriant with orange and lime trees, mimosa, palms, and flowers, sipping their coffee and smoking the narghileh, the smoke curling lazily through the mousharabieh and climbing honeysuckle and jasmine towards the dark blue sky.

When Constantine and Algiers fell into the hands of the French, some of the most pitiable examples of imprisonment and slavery were found among the middle-class inhabitants of

these cities. Arabs of moderate means, for instance, who could not afford large villas and gardens, housed their wives in small rooms in the town, and from motives of jealousy, or brutality in many cases, the fair creatures were never allowed to see the light of the open street. For want of exercise they grew so fat that they could move about only with great difficulty. Obesity constitutes beauty in the eyes of the Arabs; but aside from it, they suffered from numbers of ailments and diseases caused by close confinement.

And what mysteries lie beneath the city! For it is said that a perfect labyrinth of subterranean passages exists, probably through natural as well as artificial fissures in the rock. The native tradition is that Constantine is built on vaults, not merely to sustain the superstructure, but probably to serve as storehouses for provisions in time of peace, and for munitions of war and places of refuge during sieges. Imagine a promontory sloping up from a plain to a height of a thousand feet, then ending abruptly in a perpendicular wall of rock on three sides, opposite a similar wall, and between a gulf through which there was no escape, if the besieged were attacked from the side of the plain. This imprisoned position probably caused the construction of these underground vaults, which are now almost impossible to visit, as the passages are blocked up with stones and indescribable filth, through which the explorer has not the courage to venture, considering also the danger he would risk of being walled up or lost in the intricate ramifications.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON THE WAY TO BISKRA.

I AM now in 1879, and on a trip to Biskra, with a new travelling companion. After our creaking and dust-incrusted conveyance had been loaded to the utmost, we left Constantine gayly at seven o'clock in the evening, tearing downhill towards the plain, bound for Batna and Biskra.

Our first excitement was at the first relay of horses. While the driver was warming up the inner man, a soldier took complete possession of the remaining space on the *impériale* above, where numerous packages to be distributed on the way were covered with a tarpaulin, and stuffed in a trunk with bedding enough for a small hospital. Smothered exclamations were emitted from a bundle which proved to be an Arab asleep, and language that was not smothered from the driver who threw trunk and bedding into the gutter, and viciously drew a knife on the offending *piou-piou*,* who, seeing himself at a decided disadvantage, smashed his umbrella on the ground in rage, and flourished it, inside out, as we drove away.

Arriving at Batna after a good twelve hours' journey, we found to our joy a blazing fire at the inn, where scarcely twenty minutes were allowed us for coffee. We were now on a high plateau considerably more than three thousand feet above the

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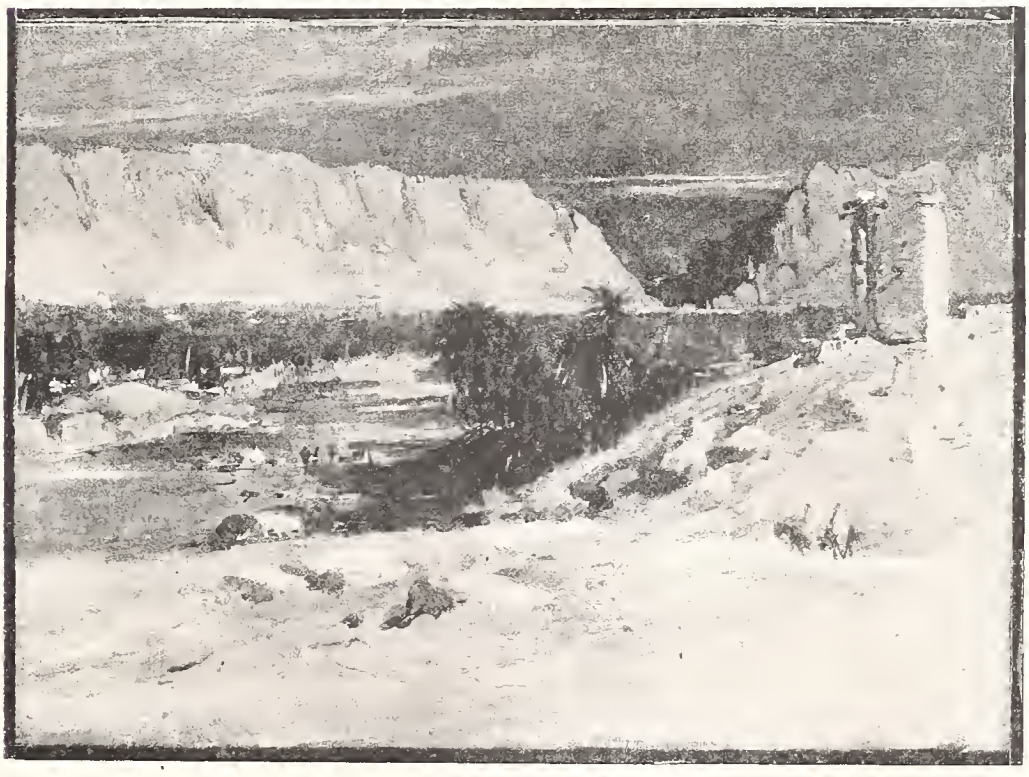
* Nickname for private soldiers.

sea. Snow and ice lay along the road-side, and the mud in the ruts, where the road was bad, was frozen; but the thermometer went up as we went down, for Biskra is only three hundred and sixty feet above the sea, and our evening was destined to be very different from our morning. Our only travelling companions from Batna were two Germans, a big and a lesser



EL-KANTARA.

German, interested in botany. In the small vehicle, which did the service of courier, or mail-carrier, there was room for four and no more. If I remember rightly, our heavier baggage was brought to us by the diligence which left Batna three times a week.

For several hours we were all cross and half frozen; our teeth chattered notwithstanding our supply of heavy overcoats

and shawls. The landscape was bleak and barren; black bushes among gray rocks, pine-trees and cedars, made a Norway of our North Africa, and an icy wind swept across the high plateau; but the sun was doing his duty by beginning to dispel the slaty early morning clouds, and seemed to promise more genial rays farther on. We scarcely came out of our shells before arriving at El-Kantara towards noon: the rugged and cheerless arid mountains invited no enthusiasm; the Arabs we met on the way were travellers; they were muffled in their burnooses, and walked fast to keep warm. I remember no villages worthy of note, and one dreary stretch of plain after another unfolded itself before us. But what a change, physically and morally, was soon to come over us! El-Kantara, the Bridge, or as Fromentin calls it, the Golden Gate of the Sahara, was to amply justify this poetic and truthful comparison. The heavy clouds hanging about the northern flank of the ragged band of limestone rock, whose high and serrated edges cut sharply against the sky, seemed to stop short and grumble as if actually forbidden to cross the frontier of the Golden Gate. A sudden turn at the bottom of the hill, and there we were in a paradise of warmth and beauty, like full-fledged butterflies from frozen cocoons.

We turned our backs on Alpine scenery and temperature, and plunged into tropical vegetation. Almond, orange, and lime trees were clustered round the welcome hotel where we were to breakfast; but a sensation that overcame even our hunger was the pleasure of stretching our shaken frames, so long cramped in a narrow carriage and on slippery leather cushions. We took a run in the glowing sunlight, and had a glimpse of the sea of palm-trees, which made a dark-green mass so grateful to the eye, surrounded as the oasis was by the rocky desert quivering with heat. The fifteen thousand date-palms are the wealth of El-Kantara village, and the crop, I believe, never fails.

A narrow gap, like a slice out of a cake, and not more than one hundred and fifty feet wide at the base, where run the river and high-road, widens at the top like a knife-sharpener. This was the "Golden Gate of the Sahara" in which we at last stood.

We were to enter into a new life and atmosphere, where the sun reigns supreme, and with a power and intensity of light of which those know nothing who have not seen it.

A copious breakfast, with a hot cup of coffee and cigarette, and we were transformed beings. Our diligence, rattling over the dusty road, no longer frozen and bordered with ice, was followed by all the children in the village, every one of whom, of course, was crying out for backsheesh, and as a sou fell among them their demands ceased for a moment, while a scramble ensued.

The village of sunburnt bricks and mud lined the banks of the river. Men at that hour were lounging at cafés, although they are industrious at El-Kantara, and do not leave all the work to the women. The latter were spinning, grinding corn, or spreading fruit to dry on skins or squares of cotton stuff. Farther on they were seen washing clothes by treading them with their feet, their ample draperies tucked up at the waist and between the knees. The river runs through great bowlders of a whitish gray color, worn quite smooth by the action of the winter torrents, for the streams are swollen in winter by the snows from the high plateaus, which we had just passed over; and as the torrent rushes through the desert, frequently changing its course, tents, branches of trees, and bodies of animals are often to be seen floating on the surface of the water. As we turned to look back on the oasis from our rocky road it was difficult to realize that quite another country lay just beyond the sharp limestone hills, which now showed their glowing golden face, where not a blade of grass grew; the sand and

detached portions of the continually crumbling rock ran down its ravines and trickled through its gullies to an accumulated mass at the base. The dark band of palms stood in bold relief, and threw their intricate shadows over the white river-bed and running waters.

Unveiled women and girls in bright costumes made spots, like tropical birds, among the foliage and in the glinting sunlight. Between the tall and slender trunks of the palms, whose tufts of wiry branches met and interlaced and were laden with bright yellow and brown clusters of dates, we could see other trees in blossom and bearing fruit: the mulberry, apricot, apple, and almond, discreetly screening other villages beyond, for there are several of them in the same oasis. Square towers of the same color and construction as the huts loomed up here and there. These are used as watch-towers, where the natives keep guard over their ripe fruit. Great black masses of mountain in the shadow of the luminous wall facing south gave vigor and brilliancy to this sunny, wonderful picture; and as we descended the great plain to the south we bade a long farewell to the bleak region beyond them. We were now in the desert—not yet the desert of rolling sand-hills, but in the rocky, mountainous region, where the vegetation was scanty and of a scrubby nature, except in occasional oases where water was to be found, and where patches of soil were cultivated and a few modern French colonists' houses built. At the edges of the green patches of wheat and oats would be a few tents of nomads. Extreme poverty never was shown to me in such naked misery as in the humble resting-places of some of those who were apparently the outcasts of these wandering tribes. On a hill-side among the surrounding barren rocks I noticed occasionally two or three strips of ploughed ground scarcely ten yards square; the tilling of the ground was done either by hand or by means

of the rudest plough — a sharpened piece of log, sometimes spoken of as the Arab nail, fastened to a small trunk of tree, which served for the shaft. A mangy camel and donkey were yoked together. On one occasion I saw a woman carrying her babe on her back and tugging at the plough by the side of a donkey, while her husband guided the ploughshare. Their home for the time being, until they had gathered in what they had sown by the sweat of their brow, was a hole in some nook in front of which they had made a door-way of brushwood. The Arab is not an agriculturist in the accepted sense of the word. His shallow ploughing, with an instrument justly compared to a nail which only scratches the earth's surface, might be improved by a little more trouble and ingenuity. This superficial tilling of the ground costs him double the amount of grain; for he has no harrow, and reaps perhaps only half of what he sows: the crows and mice enjoy the other half. Then, again, the Arab will always plough the same piece of ground in the same way, and sow the same crop—wheat, corn, or barley; so that he exhausts his earth and frequently reaps miserable results. He is also very improvident by nature. When his crops fail he borrows two or three hundred francs from the Caïd or a wealthy neighbor until he is able to refund the sum after a good harvest. Then he first pays his debt, and with the remainder of his money he treats his friends to a fête—good dinners of mutton and kouskous, plenty of gunpowder, and a grand "fantasia," in which all the proceeds of his good-fortune go off in smoke; and for the rest of the year he continues to practise his accustomed strict economy until another season brings him either a new debt or a fête.

Towards evening, as we were passing a river-bed of white pebbles, among which trickled the last lingering thread of water meandering about the roots of bushy pink and white

oleander, we met a wandering family, the father and sons on foot, a few donkeys, cows, and goats, then two camels bearing on their backs the women and children, who seemed to be smiling and happy, shut in by an enormous round palanquin formed of tree branches and wound round with ornamented blankets and tellis, or saddle-bags, to prevent the children from falling out. Other forms of palanquin in this region are a great bow over the camel's hump, with cross-stakes, which support the heavy woollen tent, generally made of a rich red blanket about six yards long by two wide, serving also very frequently as a part of the costume worn by the women, but used for this purpose when travelling. A stuffed saddle fits round the camel's hump like a turban on a shaven head; then another saddle, formed of wood and fashioned like the bones of a chicken's breast, supports the large framework, resembling a cage, over which are thrown the draperies and carpets. A seat is arranged on either side of the camel's hump, each to carry a woman. The wives, thus hidden from view, are sheltered from the hot sun; that is one recommendation. But the ship-like motion of the camel and the stuffiness of so much wool about them, besides their own heavy wearing apparel, without mentioning numerous bags and baskets poked into every available corner of their migrating tower, must be, to say the least, uncomfortable.

Our horses, in descending the steep incline of one bank of the river, tore down at full speed in order to make sure of hauling us up on the opposite bank. We were now crossing a plain of sand in which grew tufts of alfa grass; in the middle distance was a strip of olive brown earth, then huge mounds in whose rounded, dark ochre sides were great pale yellow and white blotches, where rocks and earth had been recently detached. Behind these mounds other stretches of plain led back

to high hills of dark and dense blue, for they presented their shadow side to us; and again, as far as the eye could reach, other blue mountain ridges, all of which lay on the road to our destination. The intensity and variety of color in this desert landscape is indescribable, and it was ever changing in beauty of form and line. Occasionally a glassy lake of water was formed, as if by magic, and the masses of rocks and shrubs at the farther edge were reflected and twisted into fantastic shapes; then all would disappear; it was the ever-deceptive mirage.

The enthusiasm of the bigger German, one of our travelling companions, knew no bounds, and although he was not a brother of the brush, he manifested a keen appreciation of the beautiful. I find, in a letter to a friend, written at the time of my trip, the following phrase: "Our big companion fired off his enthusiasm like cannon-balls, and seemed to jump after them, in his ardent appreciation of nature." The fact of his limited knowledge of French or English accounted for his eagerness in trying to make us understand his feelings, which were certainly genuine;

THE DESERT NEAR BISKRA AND THE AURES.

and he seemed, moreover, like a jolly good fellow notwithstanding his squabbles with the lesser German, whom he appeared somewhat to ignore.

For an hour or more we had been slowly descending a bad stony road; the new broad highway was in course of construction and was soon to be finished. We passed several enormous transport wagons, drawn by mules, and met the diligence tugging up the hill, bringing with it the dust and heat of Biskra. We were glad to get down from the high cold table-land, and these travellers were tired of the heat and of climbing. The whole establishment, the diligence and all it contained, the harness and horses, seemed to be undergoing some process of being permanently coated with a crust of dust.

Our "afternoon tea" consisted not of that beverage, which in this locality would probably have been a concoction of alfa grass and brackish water, but of bread, cheese, and beer, of which we partook with the greatest relish, at a tolerably thriving oasis. The dining saloon of the caravansary was a shed furnished with long wooden benches and a bare board table.

A little more endurance and we were soon to accomplish our twenty-four consecutive hours of travel. About six o'clock in the evening, after climbing a long range of the Aures Hills, the last barrier between us and our desert goal, which now lay at our feet, we came in full view of the mysterious and measureless horizon, merging into the evening sky like a dull and misty ocean. Though this is practically the desert, like all the rocky country through which we had travelled, as far as absence of vegetation and scarcity of water is concerned, the real Sahara only begins seriously, as may be said, at three or four days' journey still beyond the horizon now before us.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ARRIVAL AT BISKRA.

BISKRA, although a collection of several distant villages —as the name signifies—all belonging to the one oasis, interspersed and surrounded by its hundred thousand date-palms, appeared insignificant in the great expanse, and seemed to offer a rather sad store of compensation for all our fatigue. At the entrance of the principal street and on the very confines of the oasis stood a long, square, low building, whitewashed, with a large enclosure, in which, looking from above, we could see the arcades surrounding the court. This was to be our abiding place, Hotel Casenave.

On our arrival several brother artists and friends of ours left the dinner-table and rushed out of the hotel to welcome us in a manner that none can appreciate who have not experienced a cordial reception under similar circumstances. In short, what is one's life itself but an oasis into which so few congenial spirits are welcomed from the outer desert? Young Arabs squeezed their noses against the window-panes outside, winked and smirked at us to obtain our confidence as a preliminary to getting an engagement as cicerone. The arrival of other saouarrs was a great event for them, although subsequent experience proved that they were quite as unfaithful as their young brethren in Algiers and Tlemçen. Notwithstanding our extreme discomfort, we were tempted, by the novelty of new scenes which we had so long wished to witness, to visit the

town and cafés before going to bed. The perfect stillness of the bright moonlight night and balmy temperature could not have been surpassed on a stroll in Paradise. A row of houses, none of which exceeded more than one story above the ground-floor, except the military café and club for the officers, lay on

BISKRA BARBER.

the same side of the street as our own quarters. Opposite were the public gardens and promenade, planted symmetrically with trees; the Catholic church on the square, and forts enclosing barracks behind. The cafés, of which we passed several, were all of the ordinary Arab type of construction—mud

floors and walls, with soot-stained palm-tree ceilings and doors, with nooks and corners of the most curious possible conception. They were comparatively deserted, as the natives were to be found at the great café, all alive with clarionet and tam-tam, the centre of the night's entertainment, from which proceeded a deafening rhythmic noise, more like a threshing-machine than music. This café ran through one block of buildings, with entrances on the two streets, and had been made gorgeous with hangings of all kinds of material and color. The ceiling and walls were entirely hidden by immense hand-woven blankets ornamented with every conceivable combination of stripe, lozenge, and square, and by other large draperies used by the women as part of their costume. The palm-trunk pillars, surrounded by a circular bench and supporting the roof, were wound round and festooned with printed calicoes; and colored paper lanterns gave a charming soft light over the assembly. We were offered places of honor among a conglomerate mass of burnooses in the middle of the stone seats which ran along the side. Near us were eight or ten women of the Ouled-Nahil tribe —dancing girls, who, immovable as sphinxes, sat awaiting their turn to perform. Their towering head-gear of plaited wool hung over their ears and was bound by sashes and rich silk kerchiefs. What could be seen of their faces was tattooed and painted; bright red spots the size of a dollar on each cheek, crosses and zigzag designs on the chin, cheeks, and forehead; their arms ornamented in the same way; eyebrows and lashes heavily smeared with black kohl. An overpowering odor of musk was emitted from their persons, and a profusion of chinking bracelets and jewellery lay in bold relief of design and color against the classical arrangement of their rich costumes and heavy robes, which hung in ample and soft folds about them. Two of these stately creatures at a time glided

and writhed, keeping time in a languid, shuffling way with the screeching clarionets and deafening tam-tams, which figured here in considerable numbers. By great practice these dancing girls, as well as boys who dance in the cafés, have acquired a remarkable power of quivering their bodies—as horses have of rapidly moving their skins when bothered by flies—to such an extent that they can keep up a continuous jingle of their belts, to which are attached a quantity of loose bangles and sequins for the purpose; while they move their arms and wrists like the great lazy wings of a vulture. As they brushed by the spectator they would throw themselves backward, placing their forehead in a horizontal position, thus inviting him to lay a coin thereon. Such extensive calls were made upon our exchequer during the evening that we reduced specie payment to the form of copper, with which, becoming familiar with the method of artistically depositing our donations, we varied the monotony of the performance and created not a little hilarity by distributing the coin on the eyes, chin, lips, and end of the nose. Even the heavy brow, sensual lip, and bloodshot, piercing eye of the desert Arab were moved into something like amiable expression. The Arabs are wont to keep late hours, especially on such occasions, so we left them relighting their long pipes with live coals passed round in tongs by the boy who poured the coffee, and we sought the shelter of our own roof and downy (?) couches. The room allotted to us was level with the ground and looked out on the street, on the desert, on the open court, and was entered from the passage for vehicles; so that if there was noise from any point of the compass we were sure to get the full benefit of it. Although the door was the natural entrance, the following circumstance will prove that our apartment seemed to be equally accessible from all sides. From time to time we bought second-hand costumes either at the market-place or directly from the

back of whoever was willing to sell his garment and strip on the spot. On two occasions I purchased on the latter method, but no sooner had I turned my back on my room, where I had hung my acquisitions, than I became a dupe to the treachery of the seller and original possessor, who fished them off their pegs, I supposed, with a pole through the iron grating on the street or from the open window in the court. My suspicions, however, fell more heavily on the boy-of-all-work, whom I suspected of conniving to his own profit with the impudent transgressor.

MASROUDA, GIRL OF BISKRA.

Our first night's rest came to an untimely end at six o'clock the next morning, at which hour several companies of soldiers, preceded by a vigorous bugle, passed our windows on their way to drill in the open desert. Tempted by the glorious sunrise, by fresh woods and pastures new, and being thoroughly awakened by the various noises round about us, we sought repose no longer. Our room, moreover, reminded me of a bass drum, and seemed specially constructed to receive, echo, and magnify all sounds from the exterior. Before taking our coffee, and to lose nothing of the

lovely early morning, we directed our steps towards the south to see the broad river-bed and the effect of the long blue shadows over its banks and across the desert, and watch the increasing glow of sunlight on the distant pink hills to the north-east, delicately veiled in streaks by the fresh morning mist. The "mountain of salt" lay like a solid mass of crystallized mist, with jagged edges, against the blue shadows of rock beyond. The Arabs have extracted immense quantities of salt, breaking it off as needed, from this curious upheaval, the result, it is supposed, of subterranean volcanic pressure. There are no *schotts*,* or salt-marshes, in this vicinity, but they exist elsewhere

* The desert scenery on the way from Biskra to Tuggurt—or *Toogoort*, as the Arabs pronounce it—resembles portions already described; but after a distance of about forty-five miles, or at the end of two days' travel, the last sight of the beautiful Aures Mountains, north of Biskra, fades into the horizon, and then the traveller descends to a lower plain, and sees at his feet an immense lake, the schott—or salt-marsh—Melghir, about one hundred and fifty miles long. Other smaller schotts are connected with the great lake by a river eighty miles in length. These abound in water-fowl and fish—this does not sound like a description of the desert—but farther on, at something like a hundred miles, the real Sahara fine sand begins in earnest, and the road becomes heavy and very fatiguing.

The schotts are in some places very shallow, only covering the horse's hoofs, and there is a strange hollow sound to the earth, as if the traveller were walking over the roof of a resounding vault. A greater phenomenon, however, is found among the sand drifts that are not entirely destitute of vegetation. A rumbling noise, resembling muffled drums, is heard for hours together, and is supposed to be produced by the grass and weeds rubbing against each other, and by the displacement of the grains of sand continually moving at their roots. In the regions where this phenomenon is not produced the silence is absolute.

The French have bored one or two artesian wells on the way, and the low walls which surround them afford the only shade to be found. The oases are now few and far between, and the mounds of sand begin to present the aspect at a distance of ploughed ground or a basket of eggs, or of the ripples we see

in the desert—an interesting demonstration of the fact that the Sahara was once a sea, and that parts of it are still capable of being converted into lakes by artificial means. Schetma, a poor village about five miles distant, lay under a veil of pearly mist which stretched along the straight horizon, separating two other oases from the sky, and making floating islands of them.

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in the sand on the sea-shore, except that these drifts attain the height of twenty feet. The sand is so fine and loose, and is so susceptible to disturbance, that when crossed by the horses and wagon they may be almost buried if great care is not taken to avoid such a catastrophe, and this is not the exception but in certain portions the rule, especially on approaching Tuggurt from any side. Now can any one doubt the terrible consequences of a fierce sirocco in such an ocean of sand? The simple idea fills one with terror. Round pillars of masonry twelve or thirteen feet high have been built at certain distances, and for miles immense poles are also fixed in the ground to indicate the track, but through leaden clouds of sand it is still difficult to see them. Then to think of a three months' journey to Timbuctoo! Travellers often find, on leaving Tuggurt, a mountain of sand where there was a valley a day or two previous, and they naturally think that they are on the wrong road home.

Glorious was the day for the natives when, at the end of several weeks' labor, the first artesian well, in 1856, sent forth a gushing stream which yielded four thousand quarts of water a minute. The hearts of the inhabitants as well as the water-field were tapped, and the rejoicings they manifested in "fantasias," dancing, and singing, in gratitude to the French for their enterprise, can be better imagined than described. Neighboring oases, where ordinary wells existed, but had failed and become filled up, had been deserted, in the year mentioned, by the despairing inhabitants, who forsook their native land, driven away by thirst: thirst for themselves and thirst for their gardens, which continually diminished and dried up for want of irrigation. Two other artesian wells have been sunk at Tuggurt. It would be difficult to understand how a nation, however fanatical, could rise in insurrection against such benefactors as their conquerors have been. The position of the French, however, seems secure in this region from the fact that they have placed the military government of the post in the hands of an Arab officer of the Spahis, who enjoys the reputation of being upright and popular.

From dark brown camel's-hair tents came the first signs of life; horses, with their variegated blankets over them, and their fore-feet fettered by a rope, which was held to the ground by a stake at each end, and was of sufficient length to allow a little freedom of movement, were unfastened and led to drink at the stream. In the immediate foreground was a family scene in all its Biblical simplicity of character. Three or four tents had been pitched on the outskirts of the oasis, probably for the winter season, and now, for reasons known only to the nomads themselves, they were moving all their earthly possessions to another spot. One tent still remained pegged to the ground, and stretched over a wall of sun-dried mud and an enclosure of straw matted together, forming a small recess entered from the interior of the tents. This was the kitchen, from which rose a straight column of smoke, blue against the dark objects, and of a mottled brown as it passed upward, in opposition to the brilliant pale yellow sky. Is this a trivial observation? I think not; for a very common failing among artists is to paint smoke blue, regardless of the value of tone which is seen through it. If you are not aware of the fact, reader, smoke a cigarette in your studio — supposing you are an artist—and notice the smoke blue against the dark corners, brown against your skylight.

Abraham, the old grandfather, and his several sons smoked their pipes peacefully, while three young wives were struggling and panting over their difficult task of folding a bulky tent and placing it on the back of a camel, and the ill-natured beast was protesting with all his might, by gurgling and blubbering out the loose lining of his mouth. Piles of ashes, burned straw, and blackened stones indicated the homely fireside, and a circle of well-trodden earth their resting-place—"the spot that knew them, but shall know them no more."

We remonstrated with the men in our limited Arabic vocabulary, aided by gesticulations, for allowing the women to do all the work. Their answer was, "Oh, we play at fantasia, ride, and hunt; this is not our work." To make our observations perfectly clear, we set to work and helped the fine-looking women to pull the tent's pegs from the ground, which act amused them all considerably. This was an introduction, and as usual they held out hands for backsheesh; but we answered with a counter-demand for backsheesh, as we had better claim, having earned it. By this as much laughter was evoked as we had ever seen among this rather mournful class, and we parted on friendly terms.

CHAPTER XXX.

DUELS.

RETURNING by the high walls of the fort, I noticed a group of Arabs very intent on something going on over the high river-bank, under shadow of the fortifications. As I approached, all was silent except the sharp click, click, clack, click, in rapid succession, of sabres, and on turning the corner, I saw two brigadiers of the Spahi regiment (French officers over the native soldiers) naked to the waist. They had been whacking at each other with long, curved cavalry sabres, and it appeared that it is allowable to use either their right or left hand, or both; for the victim had received, inside the left arm, a slashing cut, severing a neat slice of the fleshy part of muscle almost as long as the hand, and this hung by a strip of skin. The proud vanquisher was just strutting off, in his ample pantaloons and boots, to dress himself quietly, and was apparently unconcerned, while his adversary stood gazing blankly before him, his face livid, but without any expression except that of stern determination not to wince as the surgeon dressed his arm. He grew fainter and whiter, however, sank on the grass, and asked for a glass of brandy. Honor was satisfied; the combatants had embraced each other, according to the army discipline—more galling, I should think, than the fight itself — and that was the end of the trivial dispute in a café, high words and insulting epithets, after which, whether

they wished or not, they had been obliged, through discipline, to fight. That is the general rule; but we learned later that in this case the older officer had asked permission of his captain to fight the younger—a new-comer in the regiment—who had been lacking in respect to him.

A few of the officers took their meals at our table, and after listening to our narrative of the encounter above described, entertained us with many amusing anecdotes of the pranks and punishments of the private soldiers (those not belonging to the Spahi regiment); for we were told that the whole garrison was formed of renegades, thieves, and other unmanageable subjects or "hard cases" generally, who had been sent to this distant post, where they could be kept out of mischief. In derision of their real character they gloried in the nickname of *Les Joyeux*. The officers told us of duels they had witnessed, which on two occasions had been most exciting. In one case a powerful stroke on the part of the insulted party had opened the abdomen of his adversary, causing almost immediate death; and in the other instance, although honor had been already amply satisfied by the drawing of blood, the offended combatant insisted on having more revenge, which demand was granted by the seconds, the result being the instant death of the already wounded man, who fell a victim to a terrible downward cut along the neck, severing the jugular vein. As these subjects were discussed at noonday breakfast, an officer proposed that we should all go to see a duel of an unusual character and of true local interest. "You have begun the day with excitement," one of them said, "and you might as well continue while you are in the mood; you can find plenty of material at arm's-length to transfer to canvas afterwards, and besides, you will not have time to brood over the fatiguing effects of your long journey"

We were first invited to go and take a glass of Chartreuse

and smoke a cigarette with the officers in their bachelor quarters within the barracks. Two good-sized rooms, side by side, looked more like a home than any place we had seen of late. There were large arm-chairs of wicker-work ornamented with red tassels, and made comfortable with big, cool-looking cushions of

SPAHI, ALGIERS.

cretonne, matting all over the floor and up the wainscoting, bright red hangings on the wall above, on which dangled native arms, swords, spears, Touarez saddles, with family photographs, leather pouches, stuffed lizards, fans, knick-knacks, and souvenirs of all sorts in artistic disorder. The furniture and writing-table were enlivened by objects appropriate to them, and divans were strewn with highly ornamented Touarez cush-

ions, leopard and gazelle skins. Over high and broad windows opening onto a balcony were hung wide strips of matting to keep out the heat of the sun; but being loosely woven, these allowed a free circulation of air. Gargoulehs, or jugs of porous earth, stood on the window-sill in a current of air which cooled the water in them by evaporation. The rooms were bathed in a diffused light reflected by this contrivance, so that a charm of subdued color was added. The garden without was dry and dusty; there stood clusters of palms, eight or a dozen growing from one mound, their trunks almost touching at the base, first leaning outward, then growing upright, with gray-green wiry foliage meeting and interlacing at the top like so many bayonets. The earth beneath had been worn smooth and hard. A large tame deer and gazelles were wandering about, the palm branches casting sharp lace-work shadows across their golden buff hides and slender, pipe-stem legs. "Now come to the roof and we'll have the fight," said our host. "Achmed, you young rascal, pull that small box over this way, and put the larger one in the corner, then stop that hole with a plank; stand on this low division in the terrace with a stick, and mind you do not let them get past you." The terrace was quite flat and cemented with solid wall parapet all round, about two feet high, after the fashion of the Algiers houses.

Captain D. then uncovered two cases and shook out from one an enormous *bellam*, or palm-tree lizard, about twenty-six inches long and of a dusty color; from the other box jumped another lizard, the Arab name of which I do not recall, of a dark slate color, smaller, and much more vivacious. Both of the little animals darted about the confines of the terrace like arrows, trying to get away over the wall or through a crack. After some trouble in circumscribing the area, which gave them too much room, they finally understood that fighting could no

longer be avoided, and being mortal enemies by nature, they sprang at each other after having stopped and stared for a few seconds. The large bellam seemed more powerful and could take more of a mouthful at his antagonist's hide; but the short, stolid gray lizard had the advantage over him, as he travelled at lightning speed, tiring out his foe and watching every opportunity to wound him; he possessed a formidable jaw, like that of a turtle, and when he caught hold of his opponent's hide he turned himself over and over, vigorously scrambling and scratching with his claws, and with such rapidity that he not only took out a round morsel of skin and flesh—as one would cut a hole with a pair of scissors in a blanket after folding it—but made it impossible at the same time for his adversary to get a bite in him. With similar success this plucky fighter broke several of his enemy's legs when he did not twist them completely off; his tail was not an encumbrance, for it came abruptly to an end and was like a coarse rasp; it may have been bitten off and have healed up again after a previous "affair of honor," though I believe it was originally intended by nature to be as it was. The reptiles were now separated, for the larger one was *hors de combat*, and crept into a corner, where he lay panting and exhausted; it was cruel sport, and we never asked to see a repetition of it. Guy de Maupassant, in his fascinating work "Au Soleil," gives a description of a fight between a lizard like our small gray hero and the *cerastes*, a most venomous yellow, sand-colored viper, scarcely ever more than ten inches long. The reptiles in this case were kept in close quarters in a packing-box, from which they could not escape. Here the rapid lizard exercised the same strategical instinct of tiring out his enemy by moving about so rapidly that the viper, still more sluggish than the large bellam, had no chance of planting his deadly fang, for one bite with its poison was all that was needed. Finally the ce-

rastes neglected his guard for an instant, and like lightning the indefatigable gray lizard pounced upon him, and with his terrible jaws caught and held him just behind the ears—exactly where the Arab snake-charmers take them with the fingers—while he writhed until his agonies came to an end. These lizards are nearly always to be found in the palm-tree, and can with difficulty be seen against the jagged surface of the trunk. They live on insects, the special delicacy of the bellam being large spiders of a very venomous species. The large lizard in the former combat probably expired, and was taken to be stuffed to swell the array of specimens on the walls of the young officer's rooms. Every few days he came in to breakfast and exhibited different specimens of these little reptiles, which he had caught and kept concealed in his sleeve or bosom, to be produced and allowed to scramble on the table at a moment when least expected. We accused him, however, of buying them of an old Arab woman who lived in "vieux Biskra," and who had collected several hundreds of creeping things—scorpions, spiders, lizards, and snakes—which she kept and fed in bottles and barrels. These she offered for sale to travellers and collectors.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN THE VILLAGES AROUND BISKRA.

PASSING out of Biskra proper, we were still in the oasis among palm and fig trees. Then came an open space, where, among the undulating wheat and corn fields, were pitched tents of guardians over property, or of poor nomads, making use of a rocky and comparatively worthless spot of ground at a less rate of rental, almost hidden from view by brushwood and the sweeping limbs of a great olive. The paths which connected the villages were smooth and hard, sometimes wide, then narrowing between high walls of dried mud enclosing luxuriant gardens on either side. The river, which had left the mountains about ten miles distant to the north, after flowing of its own free-will through the rocky desert, was checked a mile above Biskra by a high and thick stone wall, in which was a sluice conducting the water into a channel five or six feet broad by perhaps four feet deep. This rivulet was now diminished by half as it ran at the foot of the wall on one side of our path, for every drop is economized, and the precious liquid is sold at fixed prices to the inhabitants for the purpose of irrigating their fields and gardens. From its entrance into the oasis to its exit, where the remaining drops are soon swallowed up in the sands, the stream is stopped at intervals by hewn stones, upon which are placed other blocks of stone in order to measure accurately the quantity of water sold for irrigation, the main

stream being allowed to pass in the large opening, while the small blocks are placed as required—from half an inch to several inches between them. For the sum of one thousand francs the farmer secures perpetual use of a stream of water half an inch in width, the depth varying, at his own risk and according to the quantity of water at different seasons, from about six inches or an overflow to his profit, to almost nothing during the summer months. Four thousand francs buys perpetual use of a hand's-breadth. Then there are arrangements which allow the farmer at a lower price to use what he requires only, having it turned on every few days—three, four, or even ten—or for so many hours or minutes at a time. This system was methodically carried out by an old Arab inspector, who, with hour-glass in hand, performed his duty conscientiously, stopping the diminutive sluices with mud as soon as the stipulated lapse of time had expired. For two successive winters the supply of water had been scarce, as the confluents to the main source which furnish Biskra had run dry. Little or no snow had fallen, and the numerous villages built in the mountain gorges, dependent entirely on the melting snows for water, suffered lamentably from drought. Not only had they lost their crop of dates for two seasons, but the inhabitants—and this arduous duty was largely shared by the women—were obliged to go in search of water a distance, sometimes, of fourteen kilometres (about nine miles), with goat-skins on their backs, and with the aid of donkeys laden with skins and jars. Our friends had visited some of these poor villages, which they described as being built in terraces above the tops of the palms growing at the bottom of the deep ravines; all above was barren rock. The women, they declared, were not inferior to the Venus of Milo.

Farther on in our stroll we came across the well-known *maboul* (crazy or cracked man) of the locality, an old fellow of

near sixty years, inoffensive, smiling, and happy. He was sunning himself in the warm rays, which shot through the dense grove of palms in the gardens, throwing long shadows against the wall. He imagined himself immensely wealthy; and so he would have been, if old buttons from soldiers' uniforms, empty cartouches, tin shavings, which hung in profusion round his neck and were tied to the shreds of his threadbare burnoose, had been current coin. From bags carefully concealed and tied up he drew forth his priceless jewels—bits of colored glass, beads, crystal prisms from modern chandeliers, and no end of "truck." It is a firm belief among the Arabs that the mind of a maboul is with the Creator; he is therefore treated with respect and receives alms from the people.

Arriving at another village without leaving the oasis, we visited several interiors, passing through dark covered ways, on each side of which were black-looking abodes, with entrances scarcely four feet high; these were rented to the poor. We suddenly came to a large door wide open; from there, to a perfect representation of the Nativity, banishing certain ideas of conventionality. A young mother was sitting on the ground among the ample folds of her deep blue drapery, showing in places the yellow strip inserted at the waist. She held a distaff made of a reed wound with a thick bunch of hemp, from which she was pulling and twisting a thread, twirling in her right hand the spindle. With one foot she rocked a rude cradle, which was suspended by long cords from the ceiling and almost touched the ground. Her babe was sleeping, and a ray of sunlight streaming through a hole in the roof fell like a luminous bomb on the floor, lighting the mother's face by reflection, while the cradle caught the light in full as it swung to and fro. A rude stair-way behind the scene led to the terrace, and the opening revealed a little square of brilliant, mellow sky. To the right a

STUDIO FRIENDS AT BISKRA.

frugal soup was boiling in an earthen kettle over the fire, which sent a column of smoke to blacken the palm-branch ceiling and mingle with the cobwebs, then to be caught by the sudden current of air, twirling in a dense cloud, and fighting with the sun for exit. To the left a low wall partitioned off the stable, where a cow and goat could barely be seen in the obscurity. Before this scene we stood enraptured, and exclaimed almost simultaneously, "The Nativity!" But where was St. Joseph? Unfortunately, the saint appeared, in the form of a well-to-do Arab, much too soon; we had good reason to regret his advent. "Clear out of this!" yelled the husband, as he arrived from the other end of the dark passage-way. "Who gave you permission to come prowling around my private dwelling?" "Why, you did yourself," answered one of our party. "You authorized me only last week to come here and paint, and these are my friends." "No, no; you are in my house, and the sooner you go the better; and don't let me see you here again;" making motion at the same time with his staff and burnoose as if he were scaring out chickens.

We returned by the negro village outside of the oasis, where there was no shade except that under the low walls of miserable houses; yet this comparatively forsaken quarter was chosen by our friends, now old in experience, in which to rent an empty dwelling as a studio—not as a shelter from rainy weather, but from the wind, and also for the purpose of having models pose without the interference of the populace. Then, when we subsequently took possession of the studio as successors to our friends, our checkered experience began. The ruses for getting sitters to come, and the fruitless rendezvous given; the assistance of neighbors to whose house the suspicious and half-frightened feminine natives could first go, then sneak round the corner or through a hole in the roof by passing over the

terraces, would be as confusing a record to offer my reader as the incidents were amusing and more frequently exasperating to us. Then the halt, the maimed, and the blind, to say nothing of the healthy, ugly specimens of humanity, who pounded at the door, beseeching us, "Saouarr, Saouarr nee! Saouarr nee!" (Artist, paint me; paint my portrait.) When one of these was admitted, and a study fairly begun, his patience gave out, and he became still more anxious to get away. Our trials and tribulations were manifold, but our susceptibilities hardened in time, and we discovered that ruling with an iron rod was our only chance; for persuasion, conciliation, and a sense of uprightness are not qualities often to be appreciated by the Arab mind. The kicks and cuffs administered to the lower classes by the military we thought at first most uncalled-for and cruel, but the natives did not look upon the act so seriously.

The fête at the central café still continued, and we returned in the evening to find the Ouled-Nahil women, still magnificent under their burden of trinkets and jewellery, but not sitting as we found them the previous night—bolt-upright in tailor-fashion, their hands hanging languidly over their knees—but gathered round a table rolling cigarettes, and with several bottles of wine at their disposal. It was difficult to obtain these dancing women as models, but we made an appointment with one of them, naming a day and hour after the festivities, for we wished to make a study of the café while still in gorgeous array. In accordance with the usual custom among the Arabs, an exorbitant sum was charged in anticipation of bargaining. Twenty francs was the sum fixed by the *cafetier;* but, "to avoid prolixity," as Benvenuto says, I will simply state that after firmness on our part and haggling on the part of the cafetier, he received one franc from each of us, which had been our offer from the beginning.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SIROCCO.

WE had enjoyed a few days of heavenly weather, but we were to have a change. An approaching sirocco makes itself felt long before the wind has actually reached one, and in spite of frequent visits to the café and indulgence in awakening beverages, our energies refused to be roused from the extreme lassitude they were prey to. This feeling of drowsiness was not owing altogether to the sirocco, but also to the water (strongly charged, if I mistake not, with magnesia) which we had been drinking, and against the use of which we could not defend ourselves, for in the cooking and in the coffee and tea its disquieting properties yet remained.

Going to bed we felt the peculiar sensation on the skin of having been rubbed with sand-paper, and the desire to lubricate it with oil. The prevalence of this feeling may be one of the reasons why in many Oriental countries the natives oil themselves from head to foot; the oil must be a soothing application aside from the fact that it beautifies the complexion. The latter is without doubt the principal reason. Among the Nubians, in whose country I travelled to the second cataract, I especially noticed their lustrous skin, and there the lubrication used was nothing more nor less than castor-oil. Could we, I wonder, so far overcome our early horror of it as to resort to castor-oil for the sake of softening the skin, even if in a meas-

ure it diminished the disagreeably parched sensation? The skin of the children, who rolled naked in the sand, resembled the hide of the elephant; and the little negroes, black by nature, were of a blue-gray, and as rough as shark-skin. Let me add that these negroes, especially the adults, dress their hair with the same oil; it is then done up in tiny plaits, and not combed out or replaited for weeks and months; the oil becomes rancid in the sun, and the pungent odor will carry, in a favorable wind, a mile, and, for highly sensitive nasal organs, will kill, it may be said, at twenty paces. While sojourning with the Nubians I bought several leather girdles and pouches which had been worn. Days of saturation in soap-suds and warm water, besides two weeks' trailing in the Nile attached under my cabin-window in our dahabeah, was totally ineffectual to deodorize them; they rotted and fell to pieces, but remained faithful to the perfume of their original owners to the last moment of existence.

But to return to our bedroom and the approaching sirocco. Our night's rest was disturbed by the gale, which steadily increased, swept the great plains just without our walls, and whizzed and flurried about the colonnade of the large open court, sending clouds of sand and dust through our shutters and down the chimney, and bending the dry palm-leaves which fought with each other and produced a sound like that of a heavy shower of rain. There was a small window, about two feet square, as if intended for the porter's lodge, through which I could see, from my bed, the large folding-doors of the main entrance. This window seemed air-tight in ordinary weather, but that night the sand found its way through the cracks, and covered my counterpane and pillow, making everything gritty to the touch. My watch hung against the wall with the lid open and was filled with sand. As for the floor,

it was a small Sahara in itself, and the sand, which lay three inches thick round the door-sill, was as beautifully and symmetrically rippled as a sea-beach. My last fresh oil-study wore a mysterious veil, and could have fulfilled the services of a shark's skin; but when the paint was quite dry the sand was brushed off, and by retouching it I saved its existence. The occasion of the sirocco offered opportunities of which we took advantage. Installing our easels without and against the walls, we sheltered ourselves with sketching-umbrellas and shawls held down by stones. Near us was a branch of the river, about two feet wide and as many in depth, which had become flowing mud, and so thick that when a sudden gust blew a cloud of sand into it, it floated for a moment on the surface like so much chaff. As this was naturally the condition of all the water within our reach, an important process went on in the hotel—the filling of every available vessel in order to let the sand settle. At a short distance from us was a douar of tents in the open plain, where the camels were lying with their necks stretched in a straight line on the ground, while the smaller animals had disappeared into shelter wherever it could be found. Beyond, a detached oasis was seen through a veil, thicker and thicker towards the horizon, and the sky was obscured by a uniform cloud of sand through which the sun was seen like a pale wafer. We were soon forced to beat a retreat, as the colors on the palette became stiff with dust and our brushes unmanageable. Now, as we were prevented from working out-of-doors, was the time to negotiate for a definite sitting with our savage-looking native of the Ouled-Nahil, who had of course forgotten her engagement. Achmed, our young factotum, was accordingly sent on the errand, and returned with the promise that she would certainly come in gala costume the next morning at nine o'clock. As the sirocco generally continues three, six, or nine

days, the most profitable occupation that remained for us was the indulgence in a Moorish bath, first to study anatomy while our own was being manipulated, then to lie on our mattress on a long divan, sip coffee, and study character in the natives. The warm sunlight streamed in from small windows, contrasting with the blue vapor under the dome of the tepidarium, of which we caught glimpses as the heavy doors swung open to allow another ghost-like figure, swathed in sheets and turbans, to pass out and share our *dolce far niente*. All was quiet within; the sirocco moaned without, and we all agreed to indulge in a short nap, and let the world wag as it would. This bath resembled others, of which description has already been given in these pages, except that everything was of a ruder character and proportionately odoriferous. The following morning, the Ouled-Nahil tribe not being represented in the shape of the promised and coveted model, we repaired to her dwelling at half-past nine. Almost an entire street is taken up by these festive damsels. The brisker members of the dancing-girl community have the luxury of a dwelling with an upper story, reached by a queer little stair-way, steep and winding, the steps being immaculate with whitewash, and having slabs of slate on the top. The faded, or by-gone, dancers live on the ground-floor, either on a level with the street, or still lower. The only light in their rooms, when the door is closed, comes from a small aperture, six inches square, under the door; but the door is often sufficiently dilapidated to allow dispensing with a window. Whether in these apartments or in those of the upper story, the furniture is the same — coffee-tables, sideboards, étagères, of clumsy make, like all the common Algerian work, and painted in the most vivid colors. Carpets and draperies, hand-woven and made to last forever, unless abandoned to the ravages of moths (which are attracted by the greasiness of

OULED-NAHIL, DANCING GIRL OF BISKRA.

the wool), are thrown about in profusion. This description will answer for the houses in Biskra generally, and, in fact, throughout Algeria. The poor must content themselves with the earth floor and a strip of matting to sleep on; the luxuries come after they have converted their silver coin, to a certain extent, into bracelets, anklets, and ear-rings, which small fortune they always have at hand in case of necessity or want. This rule applies to all Arab women, besides the class we are dealing with at present. Our Ouled-Nahil carried all her wealth on her person, and the room, or rather cellar, in which she lived could boast of nothing superfluous. Knocking at her closed door, we heard a grunt from within. "Eh, who's there?" "Achmed. The saouarrs are waiting for you; why don't you come?" With that we pushed the door open; it creaked on its wooden pivot below, and knocked about in the loose fixture above. We naturally expected to find her in the act of putting the finishing touches to her eyebrows or her apparel; not at all. She roused herself drowsily from her bed, which was three feet high—an elevated portion of the mud building—and which had for mattress a piece of alfa matting. "Ah, Sidi Saouarr, I am coming in two minutes." As there was no dressing or undressing, we did not even suggest leaving her alone. She had slept in all her toggery, jewellery, and everything she had worn the night before, and probably for weeks of nights previous. Her morning ablutions were quickly performed; a saucer in which she poured a few spoonfuls of water from an earthen gargouleh was held by Achmed while she dabbed her fingers in it, and passed them over her eyelids, mouth, and upper lip, wiping them with a corner of her drapery, and adjusted the disorder in her costume, holding in her hand a round looking-glass—the kind that reflects one's face in a series of bumps and hollows—backed with leather and

ornamented with thongs of the same, with tassels and embroidery of colored silks. Arriving at our studio, Zaniyah gave us characteristic poses of her dances, aided by Achmed as a musician on the tam-tam, and by a few other youngsters, whom we let in as a great favor, but with the intention of making use of them. They clapped their hands and gave an inspiriting feeling to the scene. "So that is the way you take your morning bath, is it, Zaniyah? In a saucer?" "Oh yes, Sidi; but every week or so we go to the hot springs at Djebel bou-Gohazal, a distance of six kilometres from here, where, without paying, we can bathe as often as we like, in a tank outside the enclosure." The interior is reserved for the officers, and for those who pay. We were also told that the hot water, 112° Fahrenheit at the source, flowed into a marsh where there were fish living in a temperature of 96°.

The lack of appreciation of a picture, photograph, or any representation of nature is wanting in the Arab mind to an incredible degree, more so perhaps than among the most ignorant of the European peasants. My friend G. was making a study of a French officer of the *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, the jacket of whose uniform is ornamented with thick cords of braid. Several Arabs standing round were asked their opinion as to the resemblance to the officer. "I don't know what it is," said a Bedouin. "Well, what do you think?" asked G. "A tiger," was the answer. "No, try it again." "A gray cow with stripes across her back," was the next guess. The Arab was then holding the study in a horizontal position.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SCENES FROM LIFE IN THE SAHARA.

THE sirocco was now at the third day and had much abated; but not to risk being blown away, we sought subjects for study elsewhere than at the mercy of the wind and sand. Behind the negro village is an oasis, within our oasis of Biskra, in which a wealthy French gentleman, Monsieur Landon, has reaped the fruits of his enterprise by cultivating successfully many Australian trees, besides the cocoanut, mango, and custard-apple, which, if the acclimatization can in future be continued, will become a rare delicacy for such a tropical climate. Through the guardian of the delicious villa, as its proprietor had not yet arrived, we gained admission to the grounds, and in this delightful retreat we were completely sheltered from the wind and dust. In fact, towards evening the temperature seemed unusually low, but it was owing to our surroundings, as we discovered when we left the gardens at sunset; for we met an atmosphere that was stifling compared with that of the cool grove. The walks between the clusters of tree trunks, bushes, dense fields of bamboo, banana, and flowers were raised a foot or more from the intervening patches of grass and small species of fern and other plants which required moisture. Aside from the coolness of the late afternoon atmosphere, I remarked to my friend S. that I was not only chilled through and through, but felt an extraor-

dinary dampness round about me, as if I were sitting over water. "And so you are, my good friend; you are sitting over and in the water, and so am I. It has been turned on to irrigate these little swamps, and has gradually overflowed the roots of the plants, and the big leaves are just beginning to float." Sure enough; and in order to regain the path we could not do otherwise than walk ankle-deep in the little lake, leaving Achmed to wade in after our easels and sketching-stools.

The main villa, cool and sombre, and the separate pavilions, used, some as smoking and quiet siesta retreats, others as baths, surrounded by fragrant flowers and singing-birds, seemed indeed well suited to afford comfort even during the summer months. But the thought of the thermometer at 126° (Fahr.)—the maximum, 'tis true—or even at 105° to 110°, which is the ordinary summer heat, is enough to dispel the illusions of comfort. Even the Arabs cannot bear this temperature, and all the natives who can possibly leave Biskra go north towards Constantine, or to the high plateaus of the Tell, a cooler region that lies along the Atlas from south-west to north-east. When the intense heat of midsummer is accompanied by a sirocco, it may be imagined what the inconveniences are, if even the April temperature was insupportable. Sleeping at night becomes almost impossible, and the natives resort to wet sheets, to their cotton gandouras and turbans, which they saturate in the river and wrap round them in order to experience a few moments of partial comfort; but in an incredibly short space of time their wrappings are quite dry. The military club had rejoiced in a freezing apparatus for some years, but during the previous summer it became hopelessly out of order; so that they were obliged to quench their thirst with water, very bad beer, and other beverages, at a temperature not lower than (if I remember the exact figure) 75°. This kind of weather, especially with a sirocco, is

just what the scorpions like, and it sends them all out of their hiding-places. They scamper about like crabs among the palm-branch ceilings, and in and out of the crevices of the mud walls.

An officer of our acquaintance, stopping one summer night at a miserable dwelling, awoke at daybreak and found several of the unwelcome guests, with tails in the air, promenading on his person. In view of the chance that he might nurse a cerastes as well, he chose to sleep in his clothes and swelter rather than expose himself to torture from the bite of the scorpion or death from that of the viper. The temperature of the coldest night on record for many years previous had been 36°. It would be difficult to say which extreme caused the natives the greater suffering; for to sit, even in a thick burnoose or two, round a few embers under a hole in the roof, the thermometer within four degrees of freezing-point, and an icy wind blowing the smoke down into the dried-mud lodging, is not exactly one's idea of comfort, any more than to seek repose in wet sheets in companionship with lively scorpions. But these are extremes and exceptional. Leaving the villa Landon at sunset, we strolled out across the broad river-bed, over the high banks, on which hung straggling masses of roots in an intricate net-work, still covered with the mud that a torrent had deposited upon them. In the middle of the dry bed of the stream, furrowed with gullies which still held puddles of water here and there between banks of round stones, stood, on a slight eminence, the khouba, or tomb, of a marabout. Looking towards the villa, we saw the dense grove of palms looming up beyond the khouba in deep blue fretwork against the sky, which was now of a lurid copper color, as if the worst of the sirocco was yet to come in full blast; farther on, the vast plain melted into the foot of the serrated range of mountains, now left in a deep violet gloom after the last rays of a red sun had shed a glow on their barren pali-

sades like the intense pink of a watermelon. While crossing the plain we heard a distant rumbling and moaning, like that of breakers on a sea-shore and the sighing of the wind among pines. A terrible sand-storm, we thought. What meant the ominous black cloud that seemed to be an approaching hurricane moving towards us from the horizon? I have never seen anything more weird or so full of intensity of effect. Making haste towards home, we met the mysterious cloud, from which now proceeded the familiar sound of the gurgling noise made by camels. There were five hundred of them, and they indeed seemed like "vessels of the desert," swaying their gaunt forms against the sky, enveloping themselves and their drivers in a coating of dust. They were divided into separate hundreds, and came from their distant pastures to camp here on the plain on their way north, whither they were to move early the next morning. We were up by sunrise to see the mysterious battalions of the night, that had rested on the plain as a cloud of locusts would settle on a field which they were to devour. There was but scanty grazing for the immense herd, and fodder was procured at Biskra. The appearance of their camping-ground can be better imagined than described. The camels* were crouching, or standing with one fore-leg folded and tied so that they could not wander far without being easily captured. There were baby camels almost white, and young camels of a slightly tawny color, while the old and middle-aged beasts were mostly dark brown or nearly black. Imagine, reader, a young colt, with its long legs out of proportion, wearing pantaloons of sheepskin, and with the neck and body of an ostrich, clad in the same short

* One of the popular errors in this world is the belief that a dromedary—called by the Arabs "Mahari"—has one hump and the camel two. They may both have one or two, but the dromedary is distinguished from the camel as the race-horse is distinguished from the ordinary working-horse.

curly wool, and badly fitted to these legs, and you will form an idea of these innocent, gawky little animals staring at you with big round black eyes. When they crouch, lying on their legs folded under them, they only need to be set up on parchment bellows to make a perfect representation of the child's toy animal, with which we are all familiar. The keepers, with their families, were pulling up the stakes to which they had fastened ropes to hold down the edges of their tents, pitched for the night. The pack-camels were being laden with provisions for

CAMEL AND YOUNG, BISKRA.

a long day's journey, and the women were busy arranging their own palanquins in which they were to travel. There was nothing in this scene to recall European civilization, except, perhaps, a red handkerchief of familiar pattern and some printed calico; yet these had partaken so much of the pervading Bedouin brown that they were scarcely noticeable; all the rest was as primitive as in the days of Abraham. Ruths, Rebeccas, and Hagars arranged the howdahs on their camels, displaying shoulders and

busts like Florentine bronzes, while Reubens, Isaacs, and Josephs saddled their horses, and Benjamins and Ishmaels assembled their goats and kids for the departure. The charming words of Guillaumet occur to me in attempting to describe this scene, and express my own feelings:

"As I penetrated," he writes, "into the intimacy of these noble countries stamped with the simple grandeur of the primitive ages, I felt that, even after illustrious predecessors, it was possible to see things in a different way from theirs, to look at them from a less romantic point of view, and to embody them with a poetry extracted from their own reality. In everything was revived in my eyes the plastic beauty of antiquity; the finest examples of the nude and of drapery moved daily round about me, and I imagined I could hear the patriarchs of Genesis talking while my folios were being filled with sketches."

Returning from the camping-ground, we met several Arab prisoners under a military escort. The simple and effectual method of leading them is by means of a strong string tied in a slip-noose to the middle fingers so that any resistance tightens the knot.

During the day there was to be a grand wedding ceremony, which was not attended, fortunately, by such a tragedy as that from which the inhabitants of "vieux Biskra" had not entirely recovered. A young girl possessing a large dowry had chosen (I say had chosen, for Arab women, when rich, do not submit to the arbitrary custom of being bargained for) a young man who was poor. After the festivities were over and the marriage-knot had been tied, the young man was basely assassinated, probably by a jealous hand.

The beating of drums, tam-tams, and tambourines, with the strident voices chanting in chorus in a high and minor key,

the firing of guns and pistols, and the penetrating notes of the clarionets, announced the departure of the bride from her house. Superb trappings and housings completely concealed her, and the tall camel which bore her was almost hidden from sight by long fringes and enormous tassels slung across the animal's chest and dangling against its legs. Friends of the bride and groom pranced on horseback about the palanquin and round the gayly caparisoned horse of the young husband, playing the "fantasia," throwing their slender guns in the air and catching them, loading and firing again and again, leaving in their train a strong smell of powder. Crowds of children, and, of course, the everlasting mischievous boys of the community, were in full force; the little toddlers fluttered about like tropical birds, their entire costume a loose gandoura made of chintz, gaudy in color and stamped with such big patterns that it took two of them—to quote a wit—to complete the design; white swans amid scroll-work, lyre-birds in black on yellow ground, ducks and animals, moquette carpet designs, such as ramifications of foliage running over the shoulders; enormous roses, and a tombstone under willows of flaming red in the middle of the back. As for the bride's enjoyment during all this ceremony, she would certainly prefer to be anywhere else. Not only is she encased under the heavy palanquin for an hour or several hours together, but her whole person is veiled; she must neither peep out, nor show even a finger during her imprisonment.

The bride among the poorer classes is still treated with the respectful usage of complete concealment, and a palanquin of some sort, however shaky, is borne on a horse or mule. Carpets often form part of her dowry, and they are given, with other woven goods, as presents for the occasion; these are made use of by being thrown over the animal's back on which she rides.

In our trip to Tlemçen we have given other details of marriage arrangements, which vary but little throughout the country.

The same day we witnessed a funeral among the poor classes. The corpse was simply wrapped in sheets, and the form of the body was distinctly seen; no coffin, no draperies of any kind, covered it; tied to a frame-wood litter and strapped on the back of a shaggy mule, it produced a wofully ghastly appearance under the hot sun and dust. Pestilence, cholera, were the first black apprehensions that crossed my mind, and I let the funeral pass at a respectful distance. A number of men led the procession, chanting dolefully, and a small concourse followed, among which were the paid mourners, mostly a set of old hags, who continued to make not night, but even sunlight, hideous by their wailings. After the body had been laid in the grave, covered with earth, and a stone placed at the head and foot, the women returned through the town and continued their groans. At times they shuffled along and talked in a rational way; then they would stop suddenly, and with perhaps a signal from the leader, or else by a simultaneous understanding, such as the Shakers have, would form themselves in a circle, twelve to sixteen in number, and begin a dirge, moaning, whimpering, and screaming, accompanying their sighs with nods to their neighbors in mock misery, first to the right, then to the left, with idiotic gestures resembling those of geese while holding a general consultation. This was not all; they scratched their faces with their nails, often bringing blood, and the more salary they received the more violent their demonstrations. It was most amusing after their last exhibition of grief to see them disband and move off to attend to their own affairs, rearranging their dishevelled hair and turbans, laughing and cackling as if nothing had happened.

One of the local celebrities was a very old negro musician,

whose extraordinary aspect was more that of a gnome, a Blue-beard, or a Croquemitaine, who holds the minds of children in a state of awe rather than that of a clown who amuses them. His forefathers must have handed down to the present generation one relic of past ages, a conception of the Evil Spirit, such as might have been attributed to a savage tribe of Central Africa, or to the most remote and least civilized South Sea Islanders. And the idea was embodied in an enormous mask of diabolical expression, of which he was the maker, if not the inventor. It was made of some animal's skin, wrinkled and discolored, the teeth of shells, the hair and beard of palm fibre stained red with henna; bits of looking-glass and paint did the rest. A picturesque scene was enacted one day in a court-yard amid palm-trees, in which this old character was the head-musician, improvising comical verses in short and jerky metre, and chanting them in a manner that created much amusement. Several Ouled-Nahil women glided about as if rolled on wheels, waving their arms and sweeping the dust with their ample draperies trailing on the ground. Whether through a feeling of thanksgiving or simply to give vent to overflowing joy it was difficult to ascertain, but after the dance, as in all

THE MASKED VIRTUOSE, BISKRA.

cases where the old musician had received gratuities for his performances, he retired quite alone some distance from the town, and there he enjoyed a jig all to himself, extemporizing and beating his own accompaniments on his drum.

My friend S., besides being an artist, was a musician of rare talent, and we never did anything wiser than take with us on this journey to the Sahara our volumes of Spohr and Viotti for two violins, not only as a precious resource for our recreation, but for the pastime, if not pleasure, that we afforded to others. We never had enjoyed such renown, and probably never shall again, and we two might have shown our appreciation of applause by retiring to the desert and dancing, like the illustrious maestro above mentioned.

Our large room possessed marvellous acoustic properties, which magnified our efforts to the dignity of a grand orchestra, and it was difficult to keep an audience away. The Arab gallery listened with more curiosity than admiration, and used to ask when we were to begin our "sawing on the crin-crin." An officer and constant attendant actually and repeatedly shed tears over a favorite adagio from Spohr, and through him we were invited to the Catholic church to play at high mass one Sunday morning. The reader must remember that we were in the desert and that music is not easily to be found, and is appreciated accordingly. The good old *curé* was also moved to tears, and was not the only one who showered compliments on us. Many members of the congregation came to thank us for supplementing the short-winded organ, whose wheezing asthmatic tendency was aggravated by every return of the sirocco.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN IMPORTANT OASIS.

SIDI OKBA, the oasis situated about fifteen miles from our headquarters, offers the quaint interest so characteristic of the desert villages, but aside from that feature it is miserable and forlorn enough, although of great importance to the Arab mind as being the religious centre of this region, called the Ziban, of which Biskra is the political capital. Sidi Okba is governed by an amiable Caïd, whose well-known hospitality was one of the inducements held out to us to visit it. We wished our reception to be thoroughly cordial, and furnished ourselves with abundant provisions that we might ask the Caïd to breakfast with us instead of making a surprise-party for him at his expense; for during several seasons his generosity in receiving tourists, offering them the fat of the land in copious luncheons (thus showing his conciliatory sentiments towards the French), had been frequently imposed upon to a considerable extent. His income is a tenth or fifteenth of the produce of the oasis, amounting to about three thousand francs a year, which is not much, even in the Sahara, for a young man of thirty-three who dresses well and entertains visitors. After the usual formalities of welcome and salutations, we left our host to allow him an opportunity, while we visited the town, of giving orders concerning our mid-day repast as well as for his more important duties of attending to the numerous difficulties and complaints he had

to settle between the natives who were waiting their turn to consult him.

The mosque at Sidi Okba is spoken of as being the most ancient Mohammedan building in Africa, which is saying a good deal, considering the material of which it is built; mud, clay, stone, and wood, as usual, but wonderfully preserved by the extreme dryness of the atmosphere. The remains of the illustrious warrior and marabout, Okba, are interred in the mosque, under a khouba, and screened off in one corner. Many hundred years ago he headed an expedition to conquer Africa, and after extending "his conquest from Egypt to Tangiers, he spurred his horse into the Atlantic, and declared that only such a barrier could prevent him from forcing every nation beyond it who knew not God to worship him only or die."

We accomplished all the sight-seeing; and having been jolted and cramped in a small vehicle for two hours before arriving, we became thoroughly exhausted for want of food, and returned to the Caïd's house to smell our breakfast if we could not taste it, and were shown into the garden surrounded by a high wall. The verdure was confined to a few patches of vegetables, a few young lemon and lime trees, and a labyrinth of tall bamboo, sear and yellow, affording no shade save for lizards and scorpions. The only dense shade of foliage was under an immense orange-tree, where an arbor was formed of palm branches over which grew vines and creepers, the latter with flowers something like the morning-glory. Carpets and matting were spread, and on three sides of the tree a divan was formed of rugs and various cushions, of which several were of Touarez make. The leather made by this tribe for the purpose mentioned is stained red or yellow, and patterns are pointed in black; but the peculiarity of the design is that it is formed by cutting the leather with a sharp knife and peeling off thin

strips and tiny squares where it is required to show the natural colors of the material. The artistic contingent numbered five, the tourist two, the military two, and with the Caïd and his friend the Cadi, we were eleven seated round a large platter on which were placed some of the dishes offered by us from the hampers we had brought. The good-natured Caïd insisted upon having made for our special benefit a huge dish of kous-kous. The dessert, whether it was owing to the fact of its being totally unexpected under such circumstances and in such a place, in any other form except that of dates, oranges, and figs, was a delicate attention on the part of our host, and a most agreeable surprise to us. Little cakes and candies of round and pyramidal form were concocted from kernels from the pine cone burr, cocoanut, honey, milk, and what else I am not sure; but they seemed to possess a delicacy of flavor of which Siraudin or Boissier (Paris candy-makers) might have been proud. Over the coffee, and in clouds of tobacco-smoke, the conversation turned on the conversion of certain tracts of the desert into an inland sea, a subject in which the Caïd took much interest; then, with much shaking of hands, we took leave of our cordial host, and departed from the village.

CHAPTER XXXV.

EXCURSION INTO THE DESERT.

THE day for starting on our long-anticipated excursion of several days to the south-west was finally fixed upon, and we were not sorry for a change from our dirty hotel even at the risk of finding much worse. Captain F——, of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, organized the party, which included our artistic band of five. He furnished the horses, mules to carry provisions, and four soldiers to look after them as well as to do our cooking and wait on us generally, besides a sheik who accompanied us as guide and interpreter. Before the break of day the orderlies had gone before us, and we left at five o'clock, burdened only with our sketching material, which we kept with us, so as to have it always at hand.

The path we followed lay on an elevated slope, evidently formed by the washing away of the crumbling hills on the north during long ages. We skirted the hills for two hours. Until the sun had risen the morning air was chilly, but now our overcoats were rolled and strapped to the saddle, and we disposed of all the clothing we could get rid of conveniently, for the heat was intense. The sensation, however, was somewhat that of roasting one's self before the fire, for the air was so pure and dry that we did not feel enervated. All along the high plateau over which we travelled there was vegetation of the alfa grass, brier, aloes, cactus, and dwarf-palm order, affording

meagre pasture for camels, of which we occasionally saw a small number, watched by a boy sunning himself on a boulder or in a nest he had made for himself in a drift of deep yellow sand.

Our horses were thoroughbred Arabs, and could walk and amble about forty miles a day for weeks in succession without

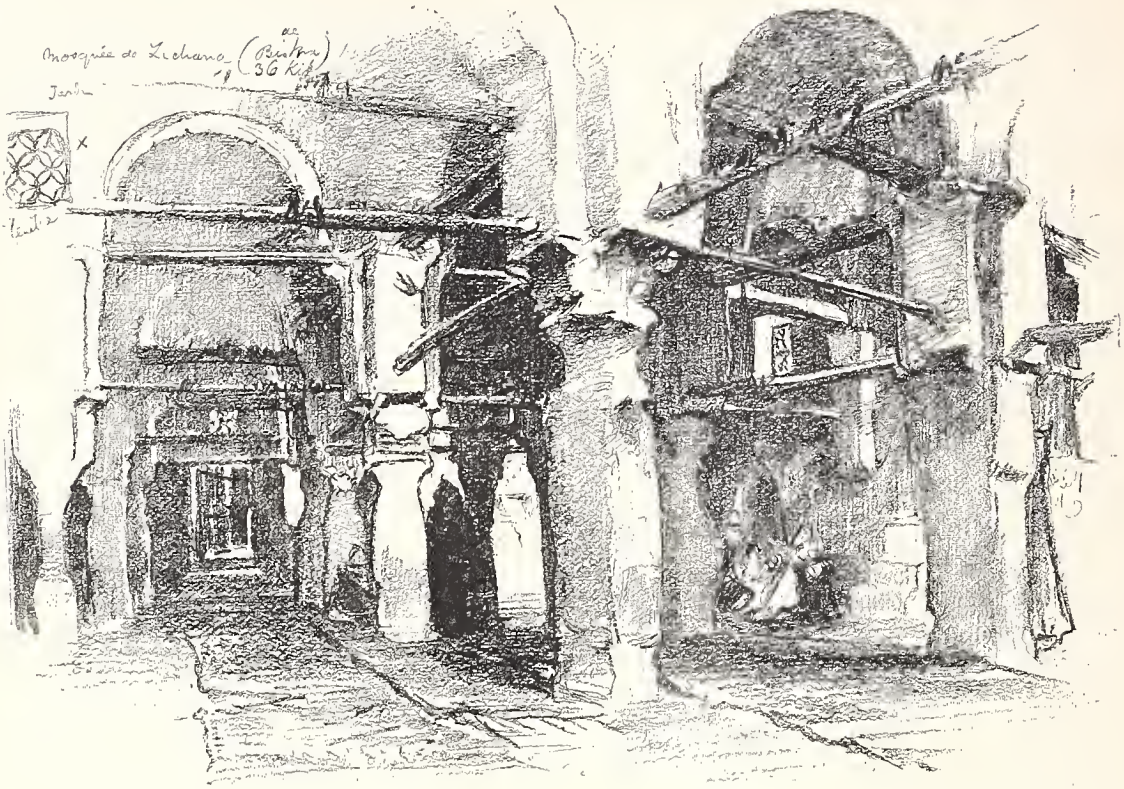
"ARAB."

fatigue; but for our short stages we indulged occasionally in a spurt at full gallop, especially to make a favorable impression as we neared the different villages. We accomplished thirty-six kilometres, or twenty-two and a half miles, by eleven o'clock, and our first halt was at Lichana, which village presented a different aspect from anything we had seen. The peculiar character of this

oasis lay in the very tall and slender palm-trees, and in the color of the usual mud structures, which wore a bleached complexion, almost white. The precious date-palms were enclosed by high walls, between which wound serpentine and narrow passage-ways, apparently never intended to receive the impression of a conveyance on wheels. The Caïd, to whom our first salutations were due, and to whom we had a letter of introduction, came out to meet us, having been notified by our guide, who had gone on ahead of us a short time previous to our arrival at the oasis. We followed the Caïd, single file, through the narrow alley-ways and black tunnels, keeping our heads low to avoid the beams above, and guided only by the light at the farther end. On hearing the echoes of our cavalcade the women hid their faces, and scampered into their houses, which looked out into the black passages. Their dwellings received light only from their own terraces and down stair-ways leading to an upper story, the latter extending over the tunnels—an economy of space, and at the same time a place of refuge from the broiling sun in summer. Then we would come to the open sky again and feel the stifling heat of mid-day. Our host was young and fair, but was hardly to be distinguished from the ordinary Arab either by dress or by his very limited knowledge of the French language. His reception was amicable, and he invited us to take coffee with him. We accepted his invitation after having breakfasted hastily under our tent, pitched by the soldiers in a large grove outside the walls of the town, where our horses could rest, enjoy their oats, and drink at the narrow stream running through a mud-lined channel. As soon as etiquette would allow, we excused ourselves to the Caïd to visit the mosque, of charming interest. Heavy round arches of whitewashed clay stood upon rude columns that looked as if they had been fashioned by throwing the material together from a distance rather than by

any careful trowelling. Several pillars of limestone, with rude capitals, probably Roman, were used in the building, and were worn quite smooth from being constantly leaned against. There was not wealth enough in the community to furnish matting all over the floor, or rather ground. More than half the mosque was not used, and the impalpable dust lay several inches thick round the base of the columns farthest removed from the mimbar or pulpit. This shaky structure, a wooden stair-way leading to a stand, and fenced in by curious crossbars for balustrades, had been originally painted green, the holy color. It seemed now too dilapidated to bear the weight of the mufti (high-priest and religious governor of the mosque), whom we saw at one o'clock, a perfect Moses with long silky and undulating white beard, and flowing locks hanging on his shoulders. He was dressed all in white, and ran through his fingers a long string of beads while he recited verses from the Koran to a few of the faithful Bedouin travellers, gathered in a half-circle about him. The alcove, scarcely three feet deep, where he had ensconced himself for a good part of the day, was ornamented with twisted and painted columns at the edges; and above on the white walls were various square patterns and scroll-work, painted in vivid colors to take the place of tiles. The little windows were of fascinating design, each one different, and here and there were enlivened with bits of stained glass between the open-work—a remnant of better days that the mosque and village had seen before the French occupation.

The people here brought a great deal of misery on themselves through their dogged determination to resist the French invasion. The ruins of Zaatcha, near our tent, afforded the most doleful picture of the consequences. It was a small place, as far as the number of inhabitants was concerned (there were only four hundred), but the fort and high walls



MOSQUE OF LICHANA.

sheltered three thousand Arabs, who had congregated there from surrounding localities. They resisted the attacks of the French for fifty-two days, until the latter, expecting an easy victory at the outset, were obliged to wait for reinforcements, defending themselves during the delay in a fortification and intrenchment at a short distance from the natives. At the end of the time mentioned the fort was compelled to surrender, and only one Arab made his escape; all the inhabitants not killed were taken prisoners.

This is the account as given by a veteran who accompanied us over the ruins. He had, according to his statement, tried to conciliate his brethren, taking the side of the French, but the former would listen to nothing but resistance to the last man.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TOLGA AND NEIGHBORING VILLAGES.

TOLGA and neighboring villages were the objects of our excursion the following morning. We left our camp at five o'clock, in good spirits; there was more breeze, and fleecy clouds streaked the sky, veiling, as smoked glass would do, the glare and heat of the sun for an hour after it rose. We were now on lower ground than the first day, crossing a flat plain where wide furrows in a series of rounded elevations showed cultivation of parts of the desert which yielded grain, and of others where the labor was apparently lost. At rare intervals we passed isolated palms and small khoubas. In two or three instances these tombs showed signs of being frequently visited by pilgrims, and a small space of hard ground, whitewashed, was enclosed by a low wall of not more than two feet high, with here and there a tombstone to indicate the burial-place either of a descendant of the marabout, whose ashes had reposed in the unmolested khouba for centuries past, or of some saintly thaleb (scholar and teacher versed in the Koran). At some distance, and quite apart from the tomb and its precincts, stood a solitary tower, about ten feet high, in the form of a pulpit; that is, a small terrace surrounded by a low balustrade of clay and reached by a dozen steps. Evidently this served as a stand from which the mufti could address the concourse of pilgrims on certain days of the year.

In this strange land news travels fast, and by means unknown to the traveller. We had letters to the sheiks of the oases we intended visiting—that is, to the chiefs, when there is no personage of the higher rank of caïd—but all Tolga seemed to know of our arrival long before our interpreter went ahead of us to deliver our introduction to its governor. No sooner had we dismounted, leaving our horses near the gates of the town—for this place seemed to have been protected from incursions on all sides by high walls—than we were escorted by several Arabs of rank to the Zaouia (zowya), or holy city. As in Lichana, we passed through dark tunnels and serpentine alley-ways communicating between the streets, but what was our surprise after stumbling and groping through a tortuous passage, narrower and blacker than all the other tunnels, and stooping low—for in places the ceiling was only four feet from the ground—at finding ourselves suddenly in a large open court of blinding brilliancy! The sheik welcomed us with much suavity of manner, and waved his hand in the direction of a low table which stood under the colonnade on a large square of clean and yellow matting, worn glossy by having been trodden on by bare feet only. I am not aware that there is anything holy about a piece of matting, as many people suppose, except within a sacred enclosure such as a mosque or khouba, but the Arabs always remove their shoes for the same

COVERED WAY AT TOLGA.

reason that we take off our hat in-doors, and for their own comfort. On the table, or rather broad stand with short legs, had been placed large dishes of delicious dates, fresh from the trees, figs, and bowls of milk both fresh and sour. The latter is often preferred by the Arabs. We required little pressing to help ourselves to the fresh milk and dates, a combination that seemed delicious, especially as we had tasted nothing since five o'clock that morning. Coffee was afterwards served; but we were requested not to smoke within the sacred court, with which request those who remained of course complied; while the explorers, with the sheik, went out into the village to enjoy a pipe together. We spent an hour or two in the Zaouia sketching, as permission was readily given; none but the younger boys among the scholars who were studying the Koran and reciting in the court took any notice whatever of our presence. A continuous and deafening din of perhaps sixty scholars, each one trying to drown the other in order to hear his own recitation and to strengthen his voice, resounded and echoed from all sides. One old teacher seemed to have every faculty affected by somnolence except that of detecting a fault uttered by a pupil in his recitation however rapidly it flowed, and with a long wand he would reach over and touch the student as a hint to him to recommence the verse, partially raising his heavy eyelids a moment, to close them and nod again. The pupils sat round in groups in the shade of the rudely constructed colonnades, under which, in quaint corners and niches, were little doors leading to humble lodgings occupied by the several old quasi-canonized professors; for Tolga seemed to be considered the college for Koran instruction of the surrounding country. At one side, brilliant with fresh whitewash and paint, stood a large khouba, with a dome in the middle and triangular ornaments at the corners, covering a

shrine, which could be seen through the latticed windows, hung with the usual honors in the way of banners, ostrich eggs, and mirrors.

Tolga the village, outside of the sacred precincts, bore the same ancient and dilapidated appearance as Lichana, and even as Zaatcha, in certain quarters where the houses, although still inhabited, were almost in ruins, and there was not sufficient enterprise to be found among the inhabitants to clear away the piles of rubbish that must have continued to accumulate since the conquest of 1840. There were no signs of new buildings; only here and there a new shutter or new plank in a door, a strip of fresh matting in front of a café, and a dab of whitewash once a year round the door-jamb of the mosque, with as much spattering on the ground as on the portions of the structure for which it was intended. The whitewashing seemed to be the only attempt at decoration, and the repairs mentioned, the only attempts at improvement. The mosque in the centre of the village stood on high ground, forming a small public square, the surface being flush with a wall about ten feet high, which was almost entirely constructed of very large blocks of hewn stone of Roman origin, worn smooth and dark brown by the thousands of burnooses that had leaned against them in the street below. The sanctuary itself was of the same character as the place of worship at Lichana.

The familiar clatter and mumbling of a school-room attracted our attention, and we peeped in, as the door opened into the street. In the centre of the class stood a grinning and jabbering idiot playing all sorts of tricks with the other boys, throwing mud pellets and wisps of straw at them, to which they paid no attention. He was perfectly nude, and as ugly as can be well imagined, a monstrosity of human form; but as his intellect was believed to have been retained by the Creator, what-

ever he did was tolerated, and he was respected as a being of a higher order. In fact, the harmless idiots of this category enjoy rare privileges, as it would be considered contrary to the will of the Almighty to cross them in their freaks and desires. This ill-formed creature ran out to us and grinned amicably enough, but hideously, and when we gave him a few sous he took them indifferently. It is a fact worthy of consideration that the insane seldom if ever reach the stage of raging madness in this country. Is it because they are treated kindly?

Before mounting our horses we desired to see something of the interior life of Tolga, and our guide took us to an interesting interior to see women weaving carpets, ornamented haïks, blankets, and horse-coverings. This manufacture was one of the principal industries of the locality, for I doubt whether the wheat and date crops were abundant enough to promote much commercial enterprise. All these villages seemed to consume their own scanty produce. The woven articles, however, were beautifully made, and sold at good prices. At an upright loom were seated two women working in the most primitive manner possible; while one of them unwound the skeins of wool and prepared them for convenience, the other woman passed the end of the thread through the upright strings of the woof, which were spread apart by a long and movable bamboo. She did not pass it with a shuttle, which goes like lightning in our modern inventions, but with her fingers; and when she had passed the thread several times, leaving it loose instead of pulling it through tightly, a large iron comb was used to pack it down. This loose placing of the thread accounts for the thickness and irregularity which we notice in all Eastern rugs; whereas the machine-made imitations of Oriental carpets look thin, papery, and poor in substance.

Through our interpreter's pressing persuasion—on a finan-

cial basis—we were admitted to another interior, where we saw a charming family scene. He requested the inmates to continue eating their kouskous as they were. They sat in a circle, young and old, grandfather, grandmother, father, wife, and several children, all dipping into the wooden dish which stood on its own pedestal in their midst. Kids and young dogs were also poking their noses under the children's arms, look-

INTERIOR AT LICHANA.

ing with longing eyes of expectancy. Their horse, a fine gray Arab, was eating his grass near them, his feet fettered to the ground, close by the black hole just big enough to accommodate him, which was on one side of the humble dwelling, and in which he could be kept by a rope across the entrance. Streaks of sunlight, making solid beams of the blue smoke,

fell on a multitude of utensils of all sorts. There was a hand-mill made of two flat and round granite stones, the top stone turning on a pivot by a handle on one side, and placed on a sheepskin, which caught the yellow flour.

Fafare and El-Amri were the limits of our excursion; one a luxuriant garden, the other a desert in every sense of the word. The closely planted palm-trees at the former flourishing oasis surpassed in opulence any that I have ever seen; their branches afforded a shade almost impenetrable to the sun's rays; the bark was of a healthy burnt-sienna hue, and the immense size of the trees was due to the care taken in irrigating them. Deep ditches filled with water surrounded their roots. The water was green and turbid, for it was only turned on every seventeen days. Grape-vines, honeysuckles, and creepers twined round the trunks, and clung to the thick fig-trees. Pink and white oleanders, rose-bushes, and cacti grew in the small canals, where the mud was kept wet by occasional watering. Here we rested for a short time, as the thermometer marked 95° Fahrenheit in the shade. But in order to finish our roamings and return to our camp at Lichana before night, we rode on to El-Amri. On several occasions, in passing under the palm grove at a gallop, our horses, regardless of their riders, followed the path which ran close to the leaning trunks. Not being anxious to play Absalom, I, for one, proposed that we let our steeds walk. It was not long before we were within the mosque of El-Amri, quenching our thirst from the cold well of clear water, the only luxury, I am tempted to assert, that existed in this poverty-stricken spot. The water is drawn up with buckets and poured into long troughs, where the Mohammedans drink and perform their customary ablutions before entering the mosque. Now that I wish to put on record the aspect of this place, although I can see it in my mind's eye, there seems nothing to describe.

A barren desert, deserted streets, and half-ruined dwellings partitioned off behind long low walls, all of dust and clay, with palm trunk and branches of the same uniform color; a public square where there is nothing; a shed open on all sides, which is supposed to be a Djemaa, or club, where the natives assemble to talk over the events of the day; but there seemed to be no natives to assemble, or if there were, they were all asleep; no children to run after us for backsheesh. The two or three old inhabitants whom we did see wore burnooses and turbans of the same color as the earth, and they sat nibbling at a handful of dry dates. The keeper of the mosque told us that few or none of the inhabitants used tobacco, as they could not afford the luxury. This was, indeed, a province of the Inferno; but my friend contended, when the question arose as to happiness, that these beings were more happy than we; they possess nothing, and want nothing, because they know of nothing better than their way of spending an existence.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EXPERIENCE IN A SAND-STORM.

ALL that was needed now to complete our Saharian experience was another sirocco, with which we would willingly have dispensed; but an irritating dryness in the atmosphere as we were nearing our tent at Lichana became, later in the evening, unmistakable. We had had a hard day of it, and retired early, for we were to be up at sunrise next morning in order to reach Biskra before mid-day breakfast. At midnight the storm announced its approach by a terrific roaring through the palm grove. Our soldiers' tent collapsed over them, and they came to steady our own, which seemed threatened with destruction. They tightened the ropes and placed heavy stones on the edges of the tent. For some time I had an illusion that my good friend was kicking and pinching me in his restless sleep, but by feeling about in the dense darkness I finally discovered that I was getting all these kicks and cuffs from the heavy tent, which was violently agitated by the wind. I was curious to know how matters stood without, and with some difficulty managed to peep from the tent, at the risk of being half blinded by the whirling sand; but the weird scene was fascinating, and I looked again and again, avoiding each fresh gust of wind. The sky at times, when there was a lull in the wind and the veil of floating sand was less thick, was of a leaden blue and thickly studded with stars; the moon, at its

last quarter, was about to disappear behind the rugged mountains, but still shed a ghastly light over the sand-hills and through the roaring and bristling palms, which cast black shadows, chasing each other frantically, like gnomes and sprites flitting across the gray-white earth. Our mules and horses assumed the indefinite shapes of nondescript black monsters; some lying, others standing with their noses to the ground, and their manes and tails waving wildly and mingling with their flapping blankets, which were being blown over their necks and under their feet. Then would come a sheet of sand as if blasted from a furnace, obliterating everything from view, whipping the palm branches, and bending them down until they scratched and swished furiously across our tent. There was a general movement of discomfort under our uncertain shelter; and Captain F—— made several fruitless attempts to light a candle, then turning over, covered his head completely and advised us to do likewise. At four o'clock in the morning, when all were thoroughly awake to the appreciation of our condition, there was a general burst of laughter. Sand everywhere and in everything; our hair and beards were gray with it, our pockets full of it; it had drifted and sifted under the edges of the tent, forming rolling billows and ripples, into which we stumbled in the uncertain light of the early dawn. Then the misery of waiting for our coffee, and still longer for the soldiers to pack the tents and cooking utensils, in order to follow us; for we now foresaw the necessity of stopping on the way for luncheon, and the impossibility of reaching Biskra before late in the afternoon. Five o'clock saw us on the road, and we tried to keep together as much as possible. This was easy enough while we were sheltered by Lichana, but as soon as we passed into the open desert the sand was blasted against our faces and hands, pricking the skin like so many needle-

points, and our horses were as much irritated as we. Turning their backs to the wind, they tried to go with it. We could not, at first, see the necessity of submitting ourselves to this military discipline, forcing us to spend the day under such circumstances; but the other side of the argument, and after all the more weighty one, was that the sirocco would last for three days with more or less violence, and we could not spend that amount of time in a desert village, even under the more substantial shelter of a roof, without certain provisions, such as bread, butter, and wine, of which our stock had been calculated to last three days, and we had but one ration left, and that for the breakfast of the third day.

During several hours' riding, when conversation was out of the question, we experienced a great variety in the manner of being blown about, and found a certain amount of comfort in tying our hats down, and our overcoats up over our ears, and in passing for some time under the shelter of the sloping walls of rock, hugging them as closely as possible to avoid the wind.

At eleven o'clock we halted for breakfast, which I would willingly have gone without altogether rather than stop; for the atmosphere was growing thicker and thicker, and we had not seen the worst of it yet.

Our animals were fettered under the bank of a dry torrent-bed, and the necessary canteens and saucepans were untied from the mules' saddle-bags. With a small supply of roots and fagots a fire was started, and the last dish of *bœuf à la mode*, destined for destruction, was placed over it and screened from wind by various contrivances. Finally it was considered hot, and some of us were helped on pewter plates, while others dipped into the pan; but alas! another minute a cloud of sand enveloped us, and our plates of beef were no more. Our back teeth had already been playing the mill-stone, with a good per-

centage of grit to work on when we were first served; but the last rations of sand were altogether too much. The saucepan was wiped out with a wisp of alfa grass, and we drank our wine from it; then it was filled with water, which was put on the fire to boil for the coffee. This was no place for fastidiousness, and we laughed heartily at the idea of our being so indifferent to details which would have disgusted us under ordinary circumstances.

We were now within eight miles of our destination, but how we were to leave the shelter of the hills and cross the broad expanse of desert below us became a serious question, of comfort if nothing else. The sirocco steadily increased, and the plain was now under a drifting cloud of sand blown by a westerly wind; we were still on high ground, and the sky was blue and cloudless above us, but as we went lower we found ourselves in comparative darkness where we could not see more than a few feet ahead. We had enveloped our heads with handkerchiefs, leaving only one eye uncovered. Our horses became almost unmanageable, and when spurred to go faster than a walk they kicked and whirled round as if anxious to rid themselves of their riders. Round their eyes they wore spectacles of sand, which had gathered in a thick rope on the lids, continually moistened by their tears. We stumbled into a travelling family, where the women were crouching behind their camels, which were being beaten but refused to go on, and lay with their noses to the ground, where they could breathe more easily. One of the orderlies rode a vicious horse, and on two occasions I barely escaped having my leg broken by a kick. My sketching-stool, hanging before my shin, was broken; and had it not been there my tibia would certainly have suffered instead, and I should have been in an unpleasant predicament, separated as we were from each other, out of sight and hearing. I then

went ahead of my assailant, but soon after received another kick directly under the heel of my shoe, and such an unexpected one that I was almost thrown. We had enjoyed quite enough of this kind of amusement at high pressure. Reaching the stony portion of the plain, and passing among wheat-fields, where we could breathe again with a little freedom, we could see the oasis of Biskra waving before us. Our horses started towards it at full gallop, needing no coaxing or urging. Hitherto we had been guided only by the direction of the wind blowing on our left, except when the eddies flurried round us from the mountain-side with whirlwinds that bewildered us occasionally. We had had ten hours of it, from five in the morning until three, when we entered the large court of our own hotel, not so anxious after that to leave it for a change in realms unknown, if we were to be exposed to much travelling under similar circumstances. Ours had been a fair sample of the sand-storm familiar to us through our school-books, that tell how caravans perish, lose their track, and are buried in the sands.

The first days of May presaged the enervating summer's temperature, and began to impair our energies and our industry, which had been at white-heat for the past two months. Reluctant, however, to leave the delicious quiet and easy life of the desert, influenced by the Arabs' example of enjoying existence, leaving responsibilities to take care of themselves, we folded our painting material, and at two o'clock in the morning, at which hour the heat was already oppressive, turned our backs on the slumbering oasis, and began tediously to climb the long road up the mountain-side.

Although my eyesight is exceptionally good, I acknowledged myself completely baffled in trying to distinguish the

road from the surrounding rocky desert. The small lanterns seemed of little use in lighting the road, but they made a good pair of eyes wherewith to stare the jackals out of countenance; and I am still confident in my belief that our driver trusted to a great extent in his horses to keep to the road, which they could see, having the lamps behind them. At early dawn we saw, at a short distance from our track, several natives engaged in hiding, or withdrawing, grain from their *silos*. The silo is an immense round vault underground, with a small opening at the surface. As there is absolutely no dampness at a certain depth, it is asserted that the grain—wheat, barley, oats, etc.—thrown loosely into the ground, is preserved in a perfect state for an almost indefinite length of time.

We bade adieu to the country of the sun at the "Golden Gate" of El-Kantara; and again, on the high plateaus of Batna, we donned our overcoats for the night, to continue our twenty-four hours' trip in the diligence to Constantine. There we found a hot sun, but in the shade a glacial wind which swept the dust of the streets in clouds over the yawning precipice. Our railway-train descended the steep incline towards Philippeville. Constantine faded into the sky, with its palisades and lofty walls looming higher and higher, and gilded by the setting sun, as we sank lower and lower into the gathering gloom of the valley, now dark with trees and the full verdure of spring.

THE END.

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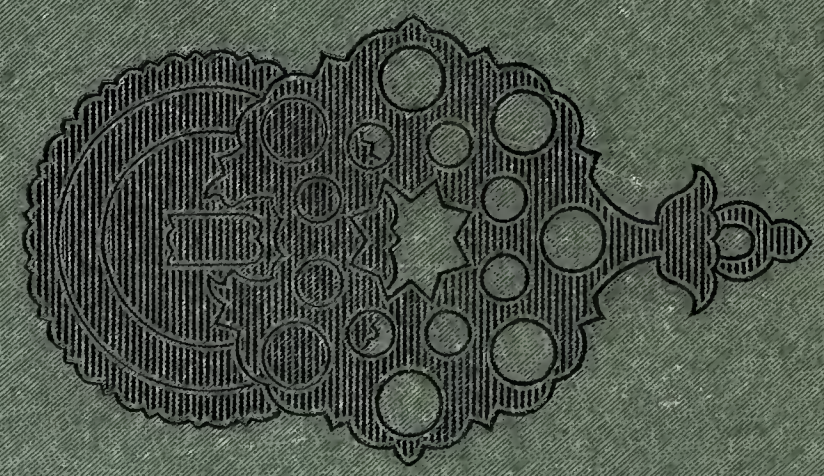
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